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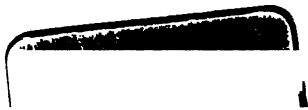
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THE
BOYHOOD OF MARTIN LUTHER.





Young Martin Luther at the Gate of Eisenach.

THE
BOYHOOD OF MARTIN LUTHER;
OR, THE
SUFFERINGS OF THE HEROIC LITTLE BEGGAR-BOY
WHO AFTERWARDS BECAME
THE GREAT GERMAN REFORMER.

BY
HENRY MAYHEW,
AUTHOR OF "LONDON LABOUR," "THE GREAT WORLD OF LONDON," "THE
PEASANT-BOY PHILOSOPHER," &c., &c.

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TO
DR. HENRY G. WRIGHT,

IN RECOGNITION OF MUCH FRIENDSHIP AND MANY PROFESSIONAL
SERVICES,

THIS BOOK

IS

DEDICATED

BY ONE WHO MUST SUBSCRIBE HIMSELF

(As long as he Lives)

A SINCERE ADMIRER OF HIS GENIUS AND PRESCRIPTIONS,

The Author.

PREFACE.

FOR the honest completion of this book, the Author made a special tour to each of the several places which were the scenes of Martin Luther's early life ; and, so that he might be duly acquainted with the manners and customs of the people, as well as with the history of the localities described in the work, the writer has been resident among them for the last two years, and consulted during that time all kinds of old chronicles, as well as examined no end of worm-eaten parish documents.

Many of the incidents given in this volume are entirely new to the British—and, indeed, to the German—public ; for, in that convenient process of “decanting” the old wine of the early chroniclers into the flashy new bottles of modern literature (a process which, in these

days of general authorcraft, makes up the greater part of the enlightened trade of original book-making), the errors of the early biographers of the German Reformer have been merely diluted, without any useful addition being made.

The explanation given hereafter as to the cause of the flight of the "old miner" from the village of Möhra, where he and his forefathers had lived for many a year in comparative comfort, and the reason of the consequent poverty of the Luther family during the great part of Martin's youth, is either utterly unknown to, or else it has been wholly ignored by, English writers on the subject. The author of the present work, however, purposely visited the scene of the tragedy, so as to get at the truth of the tradition; and he passed many days in examining, in company with the heads of the village, the dusty archives of the little community, in the hope of discovering some historical document which would either corroborate or disprove the story. But though no *direct* evidence, one way or the other, could be thus obtained, the search brought to light many curious collateral particulars which assuredly tend to

substantiate the tradition of the Möhra people. Moreover, that no pains should be spared, the historian of the village of Möhra—the minister of Steinbach, near Liebenstein—was visited, so that, as he had paid special attention to the village chronicles, and, indeed, published a volume in which all the old written authorities upon the subject were collated, the matter might be talked over with him, and the several links in the chain of circumstantial evidence duly riveted.

Of course it would be out of place, in a work which professes to represent the early life of the German reformer in the dramatic form of a little historical novel, to introduce didactic discussions as to the truth or untruth of the Möhra tradition. The account of the author's Lutheran expedition, indeed, must be reserved for another volume of another kind. Suffice it here to say, that there *is* good evidence for believing that Martin's father committed in the heat of passion the act of bloodshed to which reference is made in this work, and that this catastrophe was not only the reason of the subsequent misery of the Luther family,—a family which, but a generation or two before, had been the

barons of "Luthera," an estate in the neighbourhood, from which they derived their name,—but the remorse consequent upon the deed was, probably, the moral cause of the old miner's moody temper, even as the hot passion of the man affords something like a psychological explanation of his savage ill-treatment of little Martin himself.

To those who are apt to regard any departure from the ordinary form of language as a mere pedantic affectation, as the attempt of some puffing tailor in literature to dress up mere "dummies" of ideas in highly-eccentric clothes, so as to attract attention to his wares—to such critics the phraseology of the present book may have somewhat of a tricky and pretentious air. The author, however, has as supreme a contempt for mere verbal charlatanery as any goose who ever wielded a quill; but, on the other hand, he hopes he is sufficiently a verbal artist to have a sense of, so to speak, the costume of words; and, as he would not have the characters in an old Elizabethan drama talk modern fashionable "snip-snip," so he did not consider it quite consonant with the classic "fitnesses of time and place"

to allow Saxon characters to be continually speaking Latin-English. Hence he has purposely made the people he has introduced into the story use only such words in their colloquies as are of an Anglo-Saxon origin. Indeed, many of the phrases are but literal translations of the forcible German terms at present in use; and assuredly there is more vigour in speaking of a monk as a "show holy" (*schein-heiliger*) than in describing him merely, in comparatively weak Latin, or rather Greek-English, as a hypocrite.

By such means the author has striven to give a picturesque air, rather than a vulgar catchy one, to a book that has been a labour of devout love to him.

HY. M.

December, 1862.

THE
BOYHOOD OF MARTIN LUTHER.

PART I.

WHAT IS THE BOY TO BE?

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD FOREST PRIEST.

“Dost thou see it coming yet, neighbour?”

“Nay, cousin ; it giveth so much snow that the flakes do blind me. The sleet stingeth too as sharp as chaff in the eyes before the wind.”

“The highways be heavy with the fall,” chimed in a third. “But it will be here anon ; for I did have it from the Sacristan that it would pass the town-gate a little after the mid-day meal, and it be now three-quarters to noon. Marry ! there hasn’t been so fresh an Easter-tide this

many a year. 'Twas the cold that killed him, dear good old man !" added the woodman, blowing on the blue tips of his mittened fingers.

"Yea indeed ! he were a good Christly soul, and it maketh my heart glad to behold so many folk out on this sore day," said a woman from the Thuringer-forest, with a clean white kerchief spread over her head. "Carl the boor by Fishbach did tell me, friend, that they did forget to say to the bees their master was no more, and that every swarm in the good man's hives hath sickened since and died."

"True ! I did learn the same, good mother, from the Cantor (principal chanter) himself," added the third speaker, in corroboration of the fact ; "albeit I hear they did bethink them to shift the tub of sauerkraut, and to rap at the casks in the cellar ; and so did save the food and drink from going bad."

"Still !" cried the frau, shifting the kerchief back from her ear. "Dost thou not catch the *Miserere* ? There ! dost thou not hear the death-chant ? Hark ! thou'lt have it, surely, with the next gust, as I did, neighbour—like to a deep moan."

The snow drove through the air in long, white, slanting lines, and speckled the atmosphere with the big flakes,

which swept along like a shower of apple-blossoms blown down from the overhanging boughs.

"Yea indeed! I can hear the Currend-singers now, Frau Müller. We shall see the silver cross come round the corner of the *allée* erewhiles, an the snow will but slacken a pace, so that one may look to the end of the linden-trees."

Then as the chanting grew louder, every neck of the crowd of peasants and foresters, lining the roadway leading to the Nicolai fore-town, was craned forward, like so many frightened geese; while every eye was shaded with the hand, as though one and all were looking up against the sun, rather than the driving sleet.

"What's yonder coming so hastily along the Langelsalza road? 'Tis a tilted wagon, by the holy St. Boniface!" said a charcoal-burner, who stood against the bridge facing the cross-road.

"What folk bringeth it?" inquired another hard by.

"Sooth, an I could see I might tell thee, good man," replied the "*köhler*," as he raised himself on tiptoe, and dodged his half-washed face backward and forward, so as to get a clear view down the opposite roadway: "but the awning is nigh close-drawn against the wind and snow."

"God knows, by the white clots about the tires and the

spokes, it must bear some one from many an hour's wandering across the land," chimed in another forester, (who was evidently a maker of white-wood toys, from the sawdust and chips still clinging to his beard and brows).

A small, pinched face tipped with a soft cymbal-shaped hat, and remarkable for the sharp terrier-like expression of the features, was thrust between the little canvas curtains, and immediately there was a cry from the by-standers, "It's Hans Luther, by the Holy Elizabeth!"

"*Hei da!*" Then they hallooed to the driver. "Hans! Hanschen! good cousin Hans! Hans Luther! Halt! halt, man, while we welcome you back to Eisenach!"

Whereupon some score of peasants sprang out from the ranks beside the roadway, and seizing the ropes that served for reins, brought the little wagon to a stand-still; while another score rushed after these and gathered round the front of the van—some of the men thrusting their hands up into the cart—others scrambling on to the shafts, and flinging their arms about their old friend's neck, as they kissed him again and again—and others running round to the back, where they no sooner parted the awning and discovered the Frau Luther, with her head and face encircled with a large white cloth—a *kopf-lappen* as it was called—so that she looked like some gaunt Egyptian dame,

than they cried again, "*Gr-r-rosse Gott* ! here's the good-wife Gretha Luther come back again, too !"

The cry was no sooner raised than a mob of peasant-women who had been seated on the copings of the little bridge hard-by hurried from the breast-wall, and clustered and clamoured about the vehicle. "*Gretha liebchen* ! Cousin Gretchen ! Sweetheart ! My best true-friend !" shrieked the village dames, one after another at the cart's tail : "Come there-out ! Come there-out ! Who's to get a buss of thee there, good frau ?"

The words were hardly said, before the charcoal-burner and the hewer of wood had seized the chair on which the wife was seated in the wagon and lifted it and the dame, by main force, out into the road.

Nor was it possible for Hans to advance a step among the crowd of his old forest-friends ; so he, too, was forced to alight, and allow the vehicle to be drawn up under the lime-trees that skirted the pathway, while he and his good-wife were led towards the Hörsel-bridge, and had the best seat on the breast-wall given up to them.

"'Tis right good of thee, Hans, to come and give thy last dole of grace to the good pastor of thy young days," said the white-wood toy-maker of the Thuringer-wald when he had saluted his old friend upon both cheeks, one after the other.

“Ay, thou wast alway a righteous man, Hans, that thou wast,” added the köhler, laying his swarthy hands upon the other’s shoulders, and rocking him to and fro. As he uttered the words the charcoal-burner gave himself so sharp a jerk that it revealed a throat as different in colour from his newly-washed face as the grimy neck and shoulders of some old marble statue are from the restored head, and showed the same curious line of demarcation too between the new complexion and the old.

“Thundering weather ! thou’rt living over at Eisleben, I did hear, Hans, and that is twenty-four good hours hence,” cried the bare-legged itinerant wire-bender, that was known for miles round, and who stood drawn up among the rest, with his coil of fine iron-wire at his back, and the customary broken red pan in his hand.

“Nay ; I and Gretha have gone to abide at the mines by Mansfeld since then, Xander,” answered Hans, as he stooped to adjust the brown cow-hide leggings that covered his bare calves, and tucked the straw within his canoe-like wooden shoes.

“And thou didst come all that way to say mass for thy old forest-priest—eh ? ’Tis good, ’tis right good of thee ; and eke of Gretha, too. Heaven is never shut against such beseechings as these,” urged the simple toy-maker.

"Hah!" exclaimed Hans with a sigh, that lifted up the long "stag-dirk" or hunting-knife he carried in the broad leathern belt that was strapped round his short tunic-like smock of dark-brown serge. "An it had taken me a se'nnight to get here, I would not have missed the day; albeit we've been, as it is, two days and a night on the journey, and are sore cramped with long sitting, I can tell thee. But I wouldn't have been forth from here to-day—no! not for all the silver that's in the mines of Freiburg. Hah!" he sighed again, "God rest his soul, I say."

"Amen!" added Gretha, in the midst of talking with her friends.

"Well, and how doth it go on with thee and Gretha in thy new abiding-place, Hans? Art thou a boor and a hewer of wood still, friend?" inquired the brother-woodman, who seemed to know the other well.

But before Hans could answer the question there was a cry of "Back! back! lo! it cometh!" and immediately the boy-choristers' voices burst loudly on the ear, as the funeral procession on its way from the neighbouring village of Fischbach began to wind round the corner of the long avenue of lindens.

"Dost thou not catch the 'antiphon?'" asked a prayer-sister of the peasant-woman next her.

"*Exultabunt Domino ossa humiliata,*" then came floating, like an organ peal, upon the breeze.

"Back ! back !" they cried again ; and as the melodious wail of the *Miserere* was wafted along, louder and louder, upon each fresh gust, all the heads of the men were bared by the way, and many fell upon their knees and crossed themselves, while others bent their neck, and others again curtsied as the host went by.

"*Miserere mei Deus secundum magnam misericordiam tuam,*" chanted the still invisible choristers.

"Yon comes the sacristan, bearing the silver cross ; I can see him now, notwithstanding the sleet," said one, as the procession moved along, with muffled tread, upon the snow.

"They bury the good pastor with silver, of course," whispered the next one : "copper trappings are for such as we."

"What silken flag is this that swingeth like a tavern sign in the wind ?" asked another in an undertone.

"That is the cognizance of the gunsmiths' guild ; and this the banner of the blacksmiths' company ; and yon, with the painting of the crossed hammers on the granite block, is the masons' weapon-shield. I thought the

city-companies would be all 'out on such a day. Ach! how wonder-fine it be to see them."

Yea, indeed! costly beautiful; but he was a right good man, and well cared for by every one for miles round.

I see the three priests now in their lace robes and mitre caps—yonder thou canst catch them, cousin, twinkling between the tree-stems.

"Yea, I can see them," answered the forest-woman, "amid the cloud of holy smoke that comes from the 'thurifers' of the youngsters beside them. Dost thou mark how the silver glinsters as they swing their smoke-pans to and fro?"

"Who be the striplings, neighbour Fritz, walking alongside the priests,—not they in the earth-brown cloaks, with their bare blue legs and sandals showing beneath them, for they be the church serving-boys, I know; but those on the other side, in the dark mantles?"

"Oh, they be the *currendaners*" (the alms-singers) "of the Stadt, goodwife, with the learned John Trebomius, the burgher-shool teacher, at the head of them; and those again, following close after them, with the rosaries hanging from their hempen girdles, and their bare feet looking so red against the snow, are the monks of the barefooted order of Carmelites."

"Whe-e-ugh!" shuddered the frau, "how wretched and cold they look, poor men, with the patch of snow lying on their shaven crowns!"

"*Averte faciem tuam a peccatis meis,*" cried the choir-singer in a loud voice, as the procession neared the 'gallows-hill,' where the corpses of those last executed were still to be seen swinging in the wind.

"Marry! there be just a score and a half of lights to follow the body to the church. How unlucky the wind be so gusty!" interposed one of the foresters at the back, after he had counted up the number of candles carried on either side of the coffin.

"Still! still!" cried the feudal foresters beside the pathway, as they each raised their hand to the car by way of salute, while the women curtsied one after another in token of respect to the town dignitaries that followed as mourners immediately in the wake of the bier.

"Here be his high and nobly-born Serenity, the great 'John the Steadfast,' the Landgrave of the Wartburg, as I live, walking alone in his coat of mail, and with his halberdiers on either side of him!"

"Mark his pointed velvet shoes," whispered one of the goodwives, as the feudal lord went by. "Why, the tips of 'em be as long and curled up at the ends just like the

irons to a sliding shoe! and the good dead-and-gone vicar hath preached against such shows and idleness many a tide and oft.

"The next, I know, be his Magnificence the Over-Burgomaster, with the burgesses of Eisenach—all in their fur gowns and caps of office."

"See! yonder goes brave Conrad Cotta, who dwelleth by St. George's Platz, among the number. Marry! the good vicar is honoured right well by having such goodly guests as sorrowers at his death-rites!" ran the chorus of the simple country-folk at the roadside.

"Exultabunt Domino ossa humiliata," was heard faintly in the distance.

"Hark! the chant hath ceased; and now the city band doth give forth the 'Dead March,' which they do always play when following a well-born soul to the grave."

Then, as the long train swept by, the peasants and villagers tailed on to the rest, walking six abreast, and each carrying his goat-skin cap in his hand.

"Never," said the peasant women that remained behind, "was such a mighty throng of mourners seen in the land before;" for there were the white-wood toymakers from the forest village of Sonneberg; the woodcutters from the little wooden thorp of Oberhoff; the fire-arm

makers from the town of Suhl; the charcoal-burners, the swineherds, the goatherds, and huntsmen from every part of the Thuringian forest; the smiths from the valley city of Schmalkalden; and the miners from the copper mines of Kupfersuhl; and even one or two of the strange-looking Wend (Vandal) peasants from the cities of Altenburg and Zwickau; indeed, some were from almost every town, hill, and wood round about; as though it had been a fair rather than a funeral.

Even those, too, that stayed in the roadway behind, watching the procession in the snow, as it filed through the old Roman gate of the Nicolai-thurm, and noting the Saxon soldier lower his matchlock, as he stood drawn up beside his striped sentry-box, with his hand on the muzzle of his gun, by way of salute as they passed—even these, we say, were almost as motley and miscellaneous a multitude as those that followed to the Mass. For it being just the close of the “Oster Messe,” or great Easter fair of Leipzig, there were Turks and Polish Jews on the spot, who had halted at Eisenach on their way back to Ratisbone, whence they were to descend the Danube to Vienna; and thus the Turkish bright-coloured shawls and turbans, and the Jewish gaberdines and furs, mingled picturesquely with the high-feathered caps of the Gotha women, the

turbanned headdresses of the Ruhla girls, the peaked coronals and long streamers of the Weimar peasantry, and even with the Vandal women's kilts and cuirasses, and their husbands' high boots and postilion-jackets: while all contrasted strongly with the white snow that clouded the air like a speckled mist, and lay like a mass of swans'-down upon the forest hills, the castle towers, and the trees, the gates, the spires, and the housetops of the old town itself; and thus made up a scene that could hardly have been witnessed in any other quarter of the world, at any other period of history.

CHAPTER II.

HANS LUTHER AND THE LITTLE LUTHERS.

THE city-bell (*Stadt-glocke*) had ceased tolling, and the Mass for the repose of the departed soul had been chanted in St. George's Church ; whereupon the funeral train wended its way to what the Germans call the " God's-acre," but cropped of all its gloomy pomp, as well as shorn of the long trail of mourners, and with merely the old pastor's relatives walking, candleless, in its wake.

Hans Luther, together with the greater portion of the workmen and peasants that had followed the corpse to the *Görgens Kirche*, retired in a body, after loitering for a time about the porch, to one of the beer-houses or " bock-cellars " (*felson-keller*), as they are still called, that were built outside the wall of the old German town. And here, as they sat quaffing their *schoppen* (pints) of white beer out of the wooden cans, in one of the large dancing halls attached to the suburban tavern, they chatted first of the charity and loving-kindness of good

old Father Johann Braun, their late Vicar of Eisenach; and then fell to welcoming Hans and Gretha Luther on their return to the Thuringer country; making all kinds of tender inquiries the while as to their friend's new life, his family, and circumstances.

"Ah, Father Johann," began Conrad Cotta, the honest burgess of St. George's Place, "was another man from the lazy cloister loafers* that lout about our city, and think of nothing but begging and feasting."

"*Pfui!* I do hate to see the barefooted and bald-pated show-holies come round with their bread-bag, and cry their '*Salve, frater! panem propter Deum,*' at one's door," chimed in one of the *cives opifices* (citizen workmen) of the town. "Not that, neighbour Conrad, I do begrudge the dole for the needy; but I do know, when I put the broken life-means into the wallet, how the friars and cloisterlings will tighten their hempen girdles at night with the pickings of the city's flesh-pots. '*Saccum per naccum*' † (the sack at the back) is ever their cry; '*Sac-*

* The expressive American term *loafer*, or more properly *lawyer*, is a true German word, signifying a vagabond, a wanderer, from the verb *Laufen*, to run.

† There is no such Latin term as "*naccum*." It seems to be a word coined upon the German preposition *Nach*, after, behind.

cum per thwack 'em,* I say," he added, with a chuckle, that set all the others off laughing at the coarse joke against the clerical burdens of the time.

Then Kuns, the charcoal-burner, spake up, and said, doggedly, "Thunder and lightning! they be the curse of the land—the plague of harvest-bugs—these monks and *pfaffen* (priests); and I care not who heareth me say the words; albeit I have been on the tramp ever since midnight through the wood to add my beseeching to the others for the easy sleeping of holy Johann Braun's soul. They be not only beggars themselves, these friars; but they breed beggars, as they do lice, to worry and suck the blood of the hard-working. Our land swarmeth with lazy rogues, great and small, ghostly and worldly, as thick as maggots in offal."

"Didn't the packmen that came across the land to the great fair at Leipzig," chimed in one of the smiths from Schmalkalden, "tell us of the bond of shoes in Alsace; and how the boors there last year did stick one of their wooden slippers as a standard on a pole, and swear beneath it to pay no tax but what they had a word in; to put an end to all the robbery of tolls that every lordling

* Ger. *Zwacken*.

can levy on each wayfaring chapman; to do away with the damnable rights of lordship; to curb the craft of the overbearing priests; and to plunder the gold-grubbing Jews?"

"Knows God?" inquired one of the company, as if he thought Master Quentin, the smith, was romancing a little.

"Ay, God knows they did," answered the smith, holding up three fingers of his right hand, in token that he called Heaven to witness to what he said; "and had I been among 'em, why, I'd ha' flung my *holz-pantofle* (the wooden slipper commonly worn in Saxony) in the air, for such a sake, as high as any."

The white-wood toymaker now interposed, with the vain hope of pacifying the burlier workmen. He was a spare, whey-faced man, with hair so yellow that one could hardly tell whether the colour was natural, or whether the locks of the carpenter were merely powdered with deal-dust; while his look and figure contrasted strongly with the form and complexion of the stalwart smith and sturdy charcoal-burner. "Still! still! neighbours," he said. "An the great lord of the Wartburg's men hear thee, a lodging in the dog-hole of the castle-rock will be thy fate; and how will either of thee, Kunz or Quentin, get thy ransom, prithee?"

Kunz started to his feet, and grasping his ebonylike stoking-pole, cried, "An his Serenity were here before me I'd speak the words. I say I'd hang up the monks by the scores, as brave Emperor Rodolph did the lordly highwaymen of the Rhine."

The *saal* door closed gently, and immediately there was a cry of "Who hath left the chamber like a hound?" but no one could tell who the departer was.

It was impossible to say whether the mysterious exit made the charcoal-burner grow pale or not, but many cried, "Thou'rt a marked man, Kunz." "I would not stand in thy wooden slippers, friend," said another to him. "Why wilt thou speak thy mind so freely? the tide is not yet full, cousin," added a third, while a fourth advised him to steal away back to the wood by the *Anna-Thal*, and not go by the town-gate either. The old smith merely cried,—

"*Pfui!* frightened hares that ye be! Never fear the monkey spies, Kunz; I do hate the cloister swarm as much as thou, and they do know it. Poor dead Johann Braun was the only real Christly soul I ever knew with a shaven crown, and he loved the poor as if they were his own kith and kin, while this day hath shown how well the poor loved him for that same sake. Why, didn't *he*,

Kunz—thou knowest it right well, forsooth—when Kunz thy namesake, the giant robber-knight of Kaufungen, killed Karl the smith of my hamlet, and was doomed to pay only 50 sols for the slaughter—didn't good old Johann Braun raise his tongue against the wrong, and cry down the unrighteousness from his stool in the church, saying, 'an Adeling's little finger was made to cost 240 sols; and a common smith and a Graf were but one in the sight of God?' Bless him!"

Up to this time Hans Luther and Gretha had set apart from the noisier portion of the company, surrounded by the goodly troop of cousins and relatives they had met with in the general gathering of the people for miles round, on their return to their native district; and they themselves had been engaged in asking after the absent members of the large family that bore the name of Luther, or Lothaire, in the neighbourhood of the Thuringian forest.*

* The name of Luther was written in many different ways—Luther, Ludher, Lutter, or Lothar—for Martin's signature was thus given by him at different times. The title has been said to mean, with curious etymological guessing, *Lutt* (or, rather, *Leute*)-*herr*, chief of men, and also *Lauter* (from *lauern*, to purify), clear, pure. But the Latin equivalent for Luther was *Lotharius*—or *Lothaire*, as the French render it—and this is evidently connected with the

At length the workman and others assembled grew tired of the eternal tavern-discussions upon the clerical delinquencies of the times; and to divert the current of

Latin word *lotus*, washed, bathed, rinsed, made clean: which is said to be from *lavor*, to wash, though, more probably, both *lotus* and *lavor* are only the cognate forms of the German *laufer* and *lauern*. So that *Lothaire* would have signified merely the baptised one, or, literally, have stood for the general *Christian* name, and which afterwards came to be the special surname of many a family. The affix *-arius*, or *-aire*, in *Loth-arius*, or *Loth-aire*, was merely another phase of the Latin *Vir*, German *Herr*, Saxon *Wer*, and Welsh *Gwr* (as in *mak-er*, *act-or*, *mountain-er*, *cash-ier*, *law-yer*, *begg-ar*, *connoiss-eur*); so that *Lotharius*, or *Lothaire*, was made from *lotus* in the same manner as *Notarius* and *Notaire* came from *notus*; *Antiquarius* and *Antiquaire* from *antiquus*; *Adversarius* and *Adversaire* from *adversus*, &c. Scaliger, indeed, tells us, in the first chapter of the sixth book of his history, that the Saxon Emperor who was called Lotharius in the French and Italian writings, was styled *Luder* in his own country. Again, it would appear that the fifth king of Kent, in England, bore the same name (Luther), as well as the Austrian sovereign in the year 855; and, moreover, that there was one Lothar on the French throne in the 10th century. Hence it is manifest that the name of Luther or Lothaire, in the olden time, belonged to no particular country or people, but was applied shortly after the introduction of Christianity into Europe to distinguish those who had been baptised in the new faith from those who still belonged to the Pagan religion. But, notwithstanding the apparent conclusiveness of the above derivation of the title Luther, and its peculiar appositiveness in connection with the name of the great champion of "gospel liberty," as being one of the first who

the beerhouse-talk, Fritz the woodman proposed they should drink a beaker to Hans and Gretha ere they quitted them again. "One jug for thanks," said he, after the manner of the country.

rejected the pagan corruptions of the Romish Church, and adopted the purer Christian faith of the Reformation, still it would seem to be doubtful whether Martin Luther's ancestors derived their surname from their early adoption of Christianity, or from *the title of the property which they formerly possessed*. Genealogists trace the Reformer's pedigree back to one *Wigand von Luther*, who lived at the beginning of the fourteenth century in the neighbourhood of Möhra, and possessed an estate called *Luttera*, or *Lutern*, situate between that village and Kupfersuhl. This *Luttera* or *Luthera*, the Pastor Atmann (the historian of Möhra) tells us at page 106 of his work, descriptive of Hans Luther's native place, is now meadow land, and known by the name of "Längers" among the peasantry; and to the north of this, he adds, there is another meadow, whose proper name is "*Luterbach*," (meaning literally "*clear brook*," and so called probably from the stream traversing it,) but which is regularly styled by the people "*Lutermich*." Now this property is proved by the old registries of estates to have belonged successively to Wigand von Luther and Fabrian von Luther, and ultimately to have passed into the possession of Dr. Martin Luther's grandfather, one Heinz Luther, who is known to have had a smelting oven (*Schmelzhütte*) standing upon it. Doubtful is it therefore, whether this same Wigand, who was the great-great-grandfather of Heinz Luther (Martin's grandfather), and from whom the Luther family derived their patronymic, was not called Wigand von *Luther* after the name of the property he possessed, for such we know was the mode in which titles (of nobility especially) were formerly given; so that in this

And when the cries of "*Leibe-hoch!*" were at an end, and the beakers of all present had been clashed, one after another, against those of Hans and his goodwife, the woodman reminded his cousin that he had not yet answered the question he had put to him just as the funeral procession hove in sight: "In thy new abiding-place art thou a boor and hewer of wood still, Hans?" he inquired once more.

"Nay, Fritz," replied Hans Luther; "I did find the felling of trees but poor work to pay the cost of my little ones."

"And the wage here hath got slighter since thou quitted Mœhra, Hans," Fritz went on; "for the top arms of the tree and the waste bark that fell to our share then, the Over-Forestan hath taken from us of late, and my Lord of the Wartburg hath scorned to see us righted over it."

"An epilepsy to him!" growled Kunz to the old smith of Schmalkalden. 'John the Steadfast' they call him, 'John the Swinehound' I say."

case the surname Luther would have expressed merely the name of a place, and the title of Wigand von Luther have been coined in the same simple manner as that of Albrecht von Mansfeld, Tom of Coventry, or even the more common English names of Wood, Hill, Lea, Holme, Thorpe, Stowe, &c.

"Hold your mouth, Sheephead!" whispered the chicken-hearted white-wood toymaker. "Think what would become of thee if any one should carry thy words to the Duke: "thou dost forget too that the Holy Elizabeth was the wife of one of these same Landgraves of the Wartburg, and that she was wont to wash the clothes of the poor in the well at the foot of the rock that still goeth by her name."

"Ay! truly! thou worshipper of old washerwomen," again snarled out the smith; "and now the family of the Landgraves no longer wash for the people, but merely find them in *irons* instead."

"Haugh! haugh! haugh!" chuckled the whole assembly.

Silence being restored, Hans Luther went on again: "Marry, I did find it bitter hard work to live at Mœhra, even with the drink money eked on to our wage, Fritz!"

"Ay, that we did!" Gretha exclaimed, in a tone of sadness, as the hardships of their early married life stole over her: "for many a tide and oft have I done my cart-load myself in the woods with my little ones at my side, and carried my corb of fagots home on my back, while my two youngsters had each their bundle on their little shoulders too."

"And art thou doing better by Mansfeld, Hans?" asked Kunz.

"We be barely stark on our feet yet awhile, Kunz," was the reply; "for the kindred come so fast upon us, that one must work early and late to find a bite and sup for all the mouths at our board."

"How many a little one hast thou, Gretchen?" inquired the boor's wife from the Werra valley, that sat beside the dame, with her back-corb of butter on the ground at her feet. "Why, thou didst bear one, I did hear, the day after thou didst leave us to go to the year-market over by Eisleben, at Martinmas, and that be now ——" she paused to think for awhile, "yea, now fourteen year gone-by, as I live!"

"That did she, mother," Hans Luther made answer; "and the next morning I did run with the brat in mine arms from our house in the *Lange-gasse* there, just round the corner, to St. Peter's Church, so that he might have the grace of baptism vouchsafed to him; and thus the feast of St. Martin did become the name's-day of the lad. An it had not been for that same Master Martin Luther," the old man added, "thrusting his nose into the world at a time when he wasn't looked for, his mother and

I, mayhap, might never have pitched our tent among the Mansfeld mines." *

* M. D'Aubigné, in the life of Martin Luther which he introduces into his *History of the Reformation*, doubts the authenticity of the above incident, saying, "This account does not appear to be correct: in fact, *none of the oldest of Luther's historians mention it*; and besides, it is about 24 leagues (72 miles) from Möhra to Eisleben, and in the condition of Luther's mother at that time, people do not readily make up their minds to travel such a distance *to see a fair*; and lastly, the evidence of Luther himself appears in direct opposition to this assertion."—*History of the Reformation*, book ii. chap. i. p. 50.

But the evidence of Luther himself in no way contravenes the veracity of the anecdote, for the passage quoted by D'Aubigné from Luther's *Epistles*, in corroboration of his assumption, merely states that he, Martin, was born in Eisleben, and baptised at St. Peter's Church in that town, and that his parents migrated thither from the neighbourhood of Eisenach. "*Ego natus sum in Eisleben, baptisatusque apud Sanctum Petrum ibidem. Parentes mei de prope Isenaco illuc migrarunt.*"—Ep. 390.

Moreover, Luther himself is hardly credible evidence upon the matter of his birth, for he says in another place, his *Table Talk* (*Tischreden*, p. 240. Frankfort, 1568), "My father went to Mansfeld, and became a miner there. *It was there I was born!*"

The most conclusive proof, however, that the story as to the cause of the Luthers' journey to Eisleben being to visit a year-market there was merely idle conjecture, is given by Herr Krumhaar, the pastor of Hilbra, in his work entitled "*Dr. Martin Luther's Vaterhaus in Mansfeld*:" "False is it," he says in his summary of the several taradiddles that he considers to have been told about Martin Luther's family and early life, "False is it that Luther's

"And how many a little chick hast thou by this time, Gretchen?" repeated the dame from the Werra valley.

"Eight in all, cousin Mina," the answer ran; four little maids after Martin, and a youngster besides—the

parents went from Mœhra to Eisleben for the sake of being present at the (Martinmas) year-market. This statement was first put forward by Nicolas Rebhahn, the Superintendent in Eisenach, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and subsequently repeated by Lechendorff. We can utterly refute this statement," he adds, "by the historical fact that *there was no year-market in Eisleben which fell the month of November, or, in other words, at Martinmas, prior to the year 1515.* Up to that period the Eisleben year-markets were held only on the Monday after '*Cantate*,' in the month of April, as well as on '*Lambert's-day*,' in the month of September, of every year." (*Bergl. d. Berf. Account of the Lordship of Mansfeld at the time of the Reformation*, s. 13.) Hence, as Martin Luther was born on the 10th of November, 1483, and the Martinmas markets in Eisleben were not instituted till upwards of thirty years afterwards, it is manifest that the Luthers could not positively have migrated to that town originally with the view of buying provisions at a place 30 hours distance from their home, and at a time when the wife was on the eve of her confinement. Such a story, however, was clearly current in Eisenach from Nicolas Rebhahn, the Superintendent there, being the first to put it forward; and, therefore, the peasant from the Werra Valley has been here made to repeat what was probably the gossip of the town. The true reason of the precipitate migration of the Luther family from the home of their forefathers will be discovered as the tale progresses, and then it will be seen why the Luthers themselves should have felt but little disposed to contradict the report.

last being my lambkin Jacob, that can yet awhile barely go alone." *

"And *he*," said Hans, laughing, "I hope *is* the last.

* The accounts given by the various biographers of Martin Luther, as to the number of the German Reformer's brothers and sisters, are curiously vague and contradictory, and show how little trouble your true book-maker thinks it necessary to devote to the elaboration of a subject. In Dr. Croly's *Life of Luther*, which is a mere picture-book swollen into the bulk of a Christmas volume, by a common-place introductory "Essay upon the Reformation in England," there is not a word about the Luther family. The Rev. Mr. Worsley, however, in his life of our hero, published in 1846, seems to have consulted the old dog-trot authorities (and nothing more)—all of which are duly paraded in the preface; for he says, in a footnote to page 39 of the Biography,—“Besides two sons, older than Martin, there were several daughters, older or younger (*six* girls in all), of whom only four married; and the number of children was made up to *ten* by the birth of James.” M. Audin, on the other hand, in the *Histoire de la Vie, des Ecrits, et des Doctrines de Martin Luther*, published in 1840, writes,—“It is not known how many children he (Hans Luther) had besides Martin. There were two, who died of the plague which desolated Europe at the commencement of the sixteenth century; and one of his daughters married the scribe, Ruhel de Mansfeld, whose name occasionally occurs in Luther's correspondence.”—*Histoire de la Vie de Martin Luther*, p. 3. Michelet, again, in his *Life of Luther*, is silent upon the matter, merely saying, “the father of Martin, who was only a poor miner, found it a very difficult matter to maintain his family; and it will be seen further on, that his children were fain at times to beg alms for sustenance.”—Hazlitt's *Translation*, p. 3. M. D'Aubigné,

My quiver is full, I can tell thee, mother; for an eight-fold throng of maws at the table are enough to sack a baron's buttery; and with the fowls of the air watched as

moreover, is even less explicit and more unsatisfactory. In the life of Martin Luther, which forms Book II. of his *History of the Reformation*, he has merely the following passages concerning Hans Luther's family:—"A year had scarcely passed away, when John and Margaret, hearing what difficulty their son found in supporting himself at Magdeburg, sent him to Eisenach, where there was a celebrated school, and in which town they had many relatives. *They had other children*; and although their means had increased, they could not maintain their son in a place where he was unknown."—*History of Reformation*, p. 52. In another part, M. D'Aubigné tells us merely that his " (Martin's) father, or Nicholas Emler, a young man of Mansfeld, often carried him in their arms to the house of George Emilius (?) and afterwards returned to fetch him home. *Emler in after years married one of Luther's sisters.*"—*Id.* p. 51. On the other hand, Keil, in his *Leben der Altern Luthers*, and Richter, in *Der Genealogie*, who, it should be borne in mind, were both connected by marriage with the lineal descendants of the Reformer's family, Keil having wedded *Katherine Sabina Luther*, who was a daughter of *Johann Martin Luther*, the Reformer's great-great-grandson, and Richter having been united to *Christine Elizabeth Luther*, the youngest female member of the same family—these two Lutheran historians are very circumstantial in their statements, and make out that Hans and Gretha had no less than thirteen (!) children living at one time; namely, the two elder sons, who are known to have died of the plague in 1520; and Martin and Jacob, or *four male* children altogether; and besides these, they give *eight daughters*, beyond the well-known traditional "*Muhme Lene*" (Aunt Lena):

they be—for not so much as a running-goose (*tramplogans*) dare the poor shoot about us—life is no ease with

viz. (1) Barbara, (2) Dorothea (married to Mackenroth), (3) Marie (married to Thielemann, in Mansfeld), and *five* other daughters, whose names are not cited, but who are said to have married respectively, (a) Kauffmann of Mansfeld, (b) Nicolaus Demler (who is evidently the Nicholas Emmler spoken of by other authors, and called Emilius by some), (c) Conrad of Eisenach, (d) Rhüel of Mansfeld (who is beyond doubt Rhuel “the scribe,” that Martin wrote to on the 23rd May, 1525, concerning the outbreak of the German peasants at that time, and who is generally spoken of as Luther’s brother-in-law, and (e) Werner Berg of Salzungen. But the above minute statement appears to have been made upon rather doubtful evidence; for, according to the Rev. K. Krumhaar, the Pastor of Hilbra, who published in Eisleben, in 1845, a small treatise upon “*Dr. Martin Luther’s Vater-haus in Mansfeld*,” there were only two brothers-in-law, viz. Paul Mackenroth and Jacob Polner, set down in the list of heirs to Hans Luther’s property; and Rhüel (or Ruhel) and Demler (or Emmler) were apparently (*scheinlich*) united to the sisters of Jacob Luther’s wife, and therefore Jacob’s brothers-in-law rather than *Martin’s*: so that, according to the Pastor of Hilbra, in the familiar mode of speaking peculiar to the time, they were called “*Schwäger*” (brothers-in-law) even by Martin Luther himself; and, consequently, mistaken for such both by Richter and Keil. But the most important proof that neither Demler, Rhüel, nor even the traditional “Muhme Lene” were directly related to the Luther family is the letter that Martin Luther, after the death of his mother, sent to his friend Melancthon, concerning the disposition of the property among the different members of the family, and which was as follows: “Know every one by this my handwriting, that by virtue of a friendly and solid contract entered into and duly ratified among

the folk in Mansfeld, forsooth, and working-men must be sore sparesome to live at all."

The charcoal-burner was up again with the grievances

us, concerning the disposition of the property of *our* dear deceased father, Hans Luther, that my dear brother Jacob Luther, Burger in Mansfeld, acting in concert with my dear brother-in-law and cousin Peter Paul Mackenroth and George Kaufmann, is to be the representative of me at present in Wittenberg. The said contract is to this effect, namely: that Jacob Luther has the permission of the others and of me, acting not only for myself but also for Hans Pelvers (Polners) and his brothers and sisters, to take unto himself the whole of the said property, and buy up of all the others the share or portion coming to them; the said property given over by us to him having been unanimously estimated as worth twelve and a half hundred guilders (*als dreizehnd halbs hundert gilden, worth £125 English*), and that every one of the children shall be entitled to receive two and a half hundred guilders (*dritte halb hundert*) for their share of the said property of our dear father." (This proves most conclusively that at the time of Hans Luther's decease there were only five of his children living, for $2\frac{1}{2} \times 5 = 12\frac{1}{2}$.) "And Jacob Luther," continues the document, "shall, immediately upon the date of this letter, pay two hundred guilders, and over and above that sum, two hundred guilders yearly on the same day of the month (and more if he be willing or able to spare it at such times) until all the several heirs of the family be satisfied and remain contented with him. Therefore we have judged it for the best, considering the indigence and need of Paul Mackenroth, that he be the first to receive his portion, and after him George Kauffman, on account of his necessities also. Having, then, determined upon this as the best course, we beg that our other brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, will be

of the time, when he heard the words. "Yrre!" he growled out like a dog, in true Saxon rage, "these lords of the soil hate any maw to be well filled but their own; for though

content with the same, so that all displeasure and ill feeling may be abolished, even as we have cast them aside, and would have them utterly dead for the future, each loving and assisting one another in a brotherly, friendly, and Christianly manner, as becomes natural in blood relatives. Finished this 10th of July, 1534. Amen. Dr. Martinus Luther—his own hand." This document places the extent of the Luther family beyond all cavil. It shows, we repeat, that at the time of the father's death there were five children living; viz. (1) Martin Luther; (2) Jacob Luther; (3) Dorothea Luther, who was the wife of Paul Mackenroth, of Ober-Russla by Weimar; (4) another daughter, married to George Kauffman, of Mansfeld; and (5) a third daughter, married to Hans Pelters, or, according to Krumhaar, more properly Polner, also of Mansfeld. Add then to these the two sons who are known to have been stricken down by the pest in the year 1520, and Barbara, who is said to have died young, and we have a family of eight children in all. According to the same authority (the minister of Hilbra) the Kauffmanns had four sons and one daughter, and these were named respectively (1) Cyriacus, (2) Fabian, (3) Andreas, (4) George, and (5) Magdalene. The names of Fabian and Andreas Kauffman are entered in the college books of Wittenberg, under the date of the 8th June, 1533, with that of Hans Luther, Martin's eldest son. Magdalena Kauffman, it appears, lived among the Reformer's family in Wittenberg, and, being sincerely beloved by the children, became universally known under the name of "*Muhme Lehne*" (Aunt Lena). This was the title applied to her even by Martin Luther himself. The Reformer, when in Coburg, at the time of the great Augsburg Diet, wrote thence to his little son,

the woods here swarm with deer as thick as mice in a corn-loft, the poor may starve on their black bread ere they can get even the 'umbles' to eat."

"Haugh! haugh!" Kunz laughed savagely, till his teeth glistened in his grimy face as white as the edging to a pall; "but we peasants *do* have a saddle of roebuck sometimes, despite all the forestans and huntsmen too. Haugh! haugh! a slice of a fat buck grilled on a bright charcoal fire is tidy and toothsome eating, I can tell thee, lads."

"Still, thou ox! still, I say!" again whispered the toy-maker; "I know thou'rt watched!"

"Thundering weather! an I could catch the watcher, I'd fell him to the ground like a stag with my stoking-pole." And the köhler, as he said the words, scrunched his jaws and grasped the heavy staff in his sooty hand.

Hans, who was then only four years of age, a loving "*kinder-briefe*" (literally, a child's letter), wherein he says, at the conclusion, "Therefore, my dear little son Hanschen, learn and pray with perfect trust; and say also to your little friends Lippus and Justus, 'Learn and pray ye likewise;' and so shall ye come with one another into the great and beautiful garden. Herewith commend yourself to the Almighty God. Greet 'Muhme Lena' for me, and give her a kiss on my own account." Magdalene Kauffmann, otherwise "*Muhme Lena*," we are told, was married, in 1538, to Ambrosius Bernd, the toll receiver (*Amts-schösser*) at Wittenberg.

"Hang 'em for thieves, as they are! is my cry. Why, only last week, neighbour Wilhelm, the boor by Saalfeld, died, and then my lord's man came and took the best pair of oxen away from the poor widow, as the high and mighty Herr Baron's 'death-fall!'"

"The cursed Italians! may they come to feel the bitter pain of want in the winter-tide!" shouted the smith of Schmalkalden. "And don't they claim at harvest-tide,—these greedy adelings,—the very pickings of the crops? Be not the boors told that the finest bundle of corn, the finest bunch of grapes, and the finest fruits of their garden, as well as the finest honey from their hives, all belong to the lords of the land? Pfui! On fasting-night, again" (Shrove Tuesday), "hath not every landsman to hand over to my lord a pig; on St. Martin's day, a pair of geese; and on St. Michael's feast, too, a pair of fowls? Pfui! Pfui! Pfui! The folk are ground to the earth, what with the pfaffen (priests), the 'mouzing-lords,' and the beggar-barons."

"But come, cousins," interposed the woodman in an assuaging tone, "we do forget our old friends in our everlasting wrongs. We can growl when they be forth on their way to Mansfeld; but let us have a smile and a mirthsome word to welcome them now."

Kunz merely rocked his body to and fro, as much as to say, "Be it so ; but it is hard to bear in stillness."

Then Hedwig, the woodman's goodwife, asked Gretha whether her first-born, Gottlieb—who was such a darling of hers when they were by Mœhra—had grown a fine man by this time.

"Yea, well, cousin," answered Gretchen, with a faint and kindly laugh ; "the youngster hath a snout-beard on his upper lip already as thick as the fur on a caterpillar's back."

The citizens and country-folk were alike tickled with the picture of sprouting adolescence, and they cried, "Well said, Gretchen !"

"And the brat thou didst bear at Eisleben, Gretchen, after quitting us at Mœhra?" went on the woodman's partner.

"Oh ! my little Martin !" said Gretha, prompting her friend with the name and sex of the child the other had never seen ; "why, he be just the double of his father, that he be. The whole town doth say as much—thou know'st it well, Hans."

"What, knowing and as book-fond as Hans Luther ?" exclaimed the goodwife, as she looked at the miner of Mansfeld. "Ah, thou wast alway at thy learning after thy

work, Hanschen, and ever looked up to as the wisest man in Mœhra—that is, after the priest, of course,” she added : “ for thou wast more than a match for the Herr Cantor our teacher, any day.”

“ Yea, Hedwig,” continued Hans Luther’s wife ; “ my Martinchen be a youngster of ableness, just like his dad. Ay,” she added, with a significant glance and nod at her husband, “ and as hot and headlong in his temper, too !”

Whereupon Fritz the woodman slapped his friend on the back, and cried, “ How dost feel, Hans ? warm as if thou’dst got a pan of live wood-ashes for a seat—eh, neighbour ? Ach the thousand ! leave the women alone for giving a man a rub with the scratchback when they get him out at the fair,” he tittered. “ A good housewife, Hans, never stirs abroad without taking her pins and needles with her.”

Hans, to turn aside the home-thrust under which he was still wincing, reverted to the subject of his son’s quickness at his studies, and said, “ Well, the youngster be but bare fourteen years yet awhile, and he hath been at the Latin school in the Market place by us, and knoweth his Donatus’ Latin grammar, and his Cisio Janus, too ; besides his catechism, and all that sort of thing.”

“ *Ach gar !*” ran the chorus of wonderment from the

assembled boors and citizen-workmen of the neighbourhood ; for in those days hardly a magistrate could do other than make his mark when called upon to sign his name.

“And to say the plain truth, neighbours,” Hans went on, “I do have hope that our Martin may come to be one of the *raths-herren*” (magistrates and town-councillors) “of Mansfeld, one day, and live to be as much looked up to by the burghers and boors round him, who come for righteousness at his hands—even as Conrad Cotta of Eisenach, here.” And as the miner uttered the words, he lifted the fur cap from his head, and bowed worshipfully to the homely burgess of the town.

“Well said, Hans ! all honour to brave Conrad Cotta !” cried the men, one and all.

“To Conrad Cotta ! good luck to him !” shouted the old smith, as he stood up, and held his wooden jug aloft in the air, “to him, who wouldn’t let the Landgrave of the Wartburg build a wall about the ducal residenz in the Stadt above ten feet in height and one foot and a-half in thickness—To your welfare, *Herr Stadt-richter* !” *

* The early citizens of Germany having learnt the advantage of dwelling in fortified places, after the institution of the imperial towns by Henry the Fowler (A.D. 918—936), and after the liberty of bearing arms had been granted to the burgher merchants and mechanics by Henry IV. (A.D. 1056—1106), as well as the enrol-

And when the cheering had ceased, Conrad rose from the settle, and lifting up his wooden jug in return cried, "One can for thanks, friends," and emptied the beaker at a draught; whereupon he bowed to them all round, saying the while "I bend myself to you, gentlemen," and quitted the *saal*.

"Why didst thou speak the name of the brave old boy?" said Kunz, doggedly; "'twas sure to drive him from us, for he cometh among us as a mere burgher, and doth not sit as a magistrate in the beer-house. *Ach gar!* ye did well, ye Eisenachers, when ye chose good Conrad for the doom-seat."

ment of the mechanic-class in each town as *Cives Opifices*, and their distribution into guilds and corporations had been ceded by Henry V. (A.D. 1106—1125), after the acquisition of such privileges as these the burghers set to work to curb the power of the territorial lords and princes, who were continually preying upon them and demanding black-mail, under the dignified title of "toll," whenever any of their wares or merchandize were transported from one part of the country to another. Then, having asserted the right of electing their own magistrates, and become strong enough at last to refuse to admit their lord within the town-gates until he had dismissed all his followers, the townsfolk next strove to prevent the noble erecting any stronghold within the city itself, and with that view they passed a municipal law, that no *schloss-residenz* (lordly dwelling-place) should be built within the ramparts of their town with walls round it beyond ten feet in height, or eighteen inches in thickness.—See Dunham's *History of the Germanic Empire*.

"True," said Hans Luther; "for if Conrad have a failing, it is that he is too soft-hearted to wield the sword of stern justice, since often it falleth to the task of righteousness to have to wound even those we love."

"Yea! yea! that is righteous, Hans!" cried the tavern assembly again; for the same savagery as the territorial rulers wreaked upon the people, the people in their turn wreaked upon their children. Indeed the mania for scourging the body (as the means of doing penance and inducing contrition in the heart), that had reigned throughout Christendom in the eleventh century, still lingered among the folk; for though they had ceased to a considerable extent to believe in the virtue of allowing *themselves* to be scourged by others, and had found the rod of little use on the reformation of *their own* natures, they certainly had not lost faith in the power of flagellation as a means of chastening the hearts of their *children*.

"Yea, Hans!" cried the old smith, "the flesh must always be well beaten if thou wouldst have toothsome food."

"Canst thou train a dog without the whip, or harness an ox to its burdens without the yoke about its neck?" chimed in a boor from the forest.

"I have given my girl the stick till her skin was branded

with the stripes like to a brindled cat's, and she hath done my bidding alway since," said a mother, who sat in a corner beside her basket-load of larks.

"And I," said Gretha, "did beat my Martin for stealing a hazel-nut once till the blood streamed from his little back like to a wounded boar ; for though the taking of but one nut did make up the whole of his sin, my wrath was such to think I had a thief for a son that I did cowhide the boy till my arm was limb-lame for a while. But Hans, I do say, is *too* stern with the child, and hath thwacked the little man till he hath made him as fearsome as a fawn."

"Yea, Gretha, and thou wouldst have the fire of the knave raging to ruin for fear of a few scars while stifling it," roughly answered the old Saxon miner. "It is only by threshing, woman, that we can sunder the corn from the mixen-stuff ; and he is but a poor husbandman now-a-days that chooseth to let the beast trample out the grain rather than ply the flail. I do tell thee, Gretha, I will cut the proud flesh out of thy child's heart, even though he die under the knife." *

* "My parents," said Luther in after life, "treated me harshly, so that I became very timid. My mother, one day, chastised me so severely about a nut that the blood came. They seriously thought

"Hear him! hear the good father!" shouted the assembled workmen and peasants of Saxony, in the sixteenth century.

"The heat of my Martin often affrighteth me, friends, and I fear the wrath of an aggrieved God is on the child," explained Hans Luther; "for his cheeks go bleached whenever the name of the holy Healer" (Saviour) "is spoken before him."

"Nay, Hans, I have told thee many a tide and oft," remonstrated Gretha, "that 'tis the heat of thine own accursed wrath that is in our little Martin's breast, and he dreadeth his Father above as he dreadeth thee who art his father here; for he thinketh the heavenly Father is but manifold more wrathful than thou art, and feareth there be no way to soothe him. Thou beatest the boy for *his* that they were doing right; but they could not distinguish character, which, however, is very necessary, in order to know when, or where, or how chastisement should be inflicted." ("*Sed non poterant discernere ingenia secundum quæ essent temperandæ correctiones*," are Luther's own words.) "It is necessary to punish, but the apple should be placed beside the rod."

"Again, his parents, though fond of their children, were very strict with them," Audin tells us; and he then goes on to say, "Luther mentions, that one day, for merely stealing a hazel-nut, his mother beat him till the blood flowed; and he says he had such fear of his father, that he always hid in the chimney-corner when he had done anything to anger him."—*Histoire de la Vie de Martin Luther*.

heat in *thine* heat, and wilt harm him for life, I fear me, some day." *

"Still, woman!" shouted Hans, as he started up and dashed his fist upon the table. "Thou didst swear to honour and be hearsome; so be *still*, I tell thee. Am I to be chid by *thee* before a throng, and to have a gain-warring wife as well as child?" And the Mansfeld miner trembled, as if palsied with the rage that was on him.

"Shame on thee, Hans, to talk such words to thy good-woman!" spake out the frau from the Werra valley. "Thy heat is the heat of the bloodshedder. Thou knowest to what lengths it hath led thee erewhiles: so take heed, man! take heed!"

The last words were uttered with so significant a look, and with such dark forebodings in the solemn shake of the upraised finger of the woman, that Hans was stricken down as if by a bolt from heaven, and he sat mute under the rebuke, covering his face with both his palms, as he bent over and buried his head almost in his lap.†

* "But the child's thoughts do not appear to have been directed to God. The only religious sentiment that could then be discovered in him was fear. Every time he heard Jesus Christ spoken of he turned pale with affright; for the Saviour had only been represented to him as an offended judge."—D'Aubigne's *Hist. Reform.* p. 51.

† Mr. Hazlitt, in his translation of M. Michelet's *Life of Luther*,

At this moment there was a cry heard without.

"What goes loose?" was the general demand of the guests within.

written by Himself, says, p. 2—"If we are to believe a modern writer (who, however, gives no authority for the statement), John (Hans) Luther had the misfortune to kill, under the impulse of passion, another peasant, whom he found trespassing on a field of his with some cattle; and it was this which compelled him to retire first to Eisleben and then to Mansfeld. It is certain, however, that he *did* retire successively to those places."

The real authority for the above statement was Johann Martin Michaelis, the author of a work upon "The Mines and Smelting Houses of Kupfersuph," published in the year 1702, who says (§ 83), "I cannot pass over in silence the fact that the father of the reverend and renowned Dr. Martin Luther originally dwelt in the neighbouring village of Mœhra, and worked in the mines (of Kupfersuph), which were then in full activity. Afterwards, however, he had the misfortune, while out in the meadows, to strike a herdsman dead, accidentally, with his own horse-bridle, and was obliged to quit the place, whereupon he retired to Eisleben, in order to obtain the same kind of employment as he had been accustomed to; his wife, who was then on the eve of her confinement with Dr. Martin Luther, following close after him, and there they both remained for the rest of their days." The Reverend K. Krumhaar, however, the Pastor of Hilbra, near Mansfeld, denies the truth of this sting, and says in his summary of the many falsities current concerning Martin Luther and his family, "Further, it is false that Luther's father killed a peasant in a quarrel, and on that account fled to Mansfeld. Had it been so, assuredly his Catholic opponents would not have kept such a matter silent. Throughout the sixteenth century nothing was

Then there was a shout of "Kunz ! Kunz and Quentin ! Stir not from the town ! the Landgrave's castellan" went on the voices outside, "is awaiting thee, with his halberd-

heard of this fable. Martin Michaelis, in his description of the Mines and Smelting Houses in Kupfersuhl, is the first that tells the silly story" (*Mährchen*).—*Dr. Martin Luther's Vaterhaus in Mansfeld*, p. 76, 2nd ed. On the other hand the Rev. Mr. Ortmann, the Pastor in Steinbach (near Mœhra), not only repeats the tale, but combats the arguments of Herr Krumhaar with no little plausibility, showing that there was really no other ostensible cause for Hans Luther quitting the neighbourhood of his youth and friends so precipitately and forcing his wife to enter upon so long a journey in her then precarious state of health. Herr Ortmann, moreover, assures us not only that such a tradition exists to this day in Mœhra, but that the precise spot where the fatal encounter occurred is actually pointed out by the villagers. "This sad calamity for Hans Luther," he says, "still lives in the minds of the Mœhra peasantry. They not only relate the story, but they even show the spot of the meadow (the "*Grosse Wiese*," as it is called) where it happened. If any admirer of the great Martin Luther should visit Mœhra and desire to see the meadow and the spot, he has only to go along the lower part of the village and follow the road called the Röhriggasse, which leads to Röhrigshof, and there at about four to five hundred paces from the village, just where the road to Röhrigshof makes a bend, lies the meadow, exactly opposite the curve in the pathway and on the right hand side going from Mœhra to Röhrigshof.

Herr Ortmann, moreover, not only cites the Mœhra tradition, but he shows, circumstantially, that the occurrence of some such disaster is the most rational explanation that can be given of Hans Luther's hasty retirement from his native village. "The Luther family," he

men, in the Nicolai fore-town !” and the next minute the messengers from Conrad Cotta dashed into the room to bid the charcoal-burner and the smith, as they dreaded a death

says, at p. 110 of the book before quoted, “were originally pretty well to do : the next-of-kin—the youngest brother on the one hand (Hans the little as he was called) had property (*Güter*) in Mœhra; and the eldest brother on the other hand (Heinz Luther) had still in the year 1527 a farm-house (*Hof*) of his own; and, moreover, the Mœhra family were down to 1521 even so well situated that Dr. Martin Luther could be lodged and entertained by them, when, in after life, he visited his father’s relatives in his father’s native village. How then could it naturally have come to pass that Hans Luther (Martin’s father) got to be so poor? * * * * Martin’s father,” he goes on, “had *some* property (*Vermögen*) at the commencement of his career. He was a ‘*Bauer*,’ literally a peasant proprietor, in Mœhra, as Dr. Martin Luther himself has told us, and, consequently, must have had some kind of estate (*Besitzung*); and it has been before shown, that he was entitled to one-third part of the property of Heine (or Heinz) Luther, his father, after the death of the old man; whilst, according to the registry of hereditary estates made out in 1676, it is manifest, that he really *did* become possessed of this property. Hans Luther, however, quits Mœhra in 1483—he goes to Eisleben, not on account of the year-market (as is alleged), for assuredly no one but a dealer or merchant goes to a year-market in a town which is from 28 to 30 hours’ journey on foot (70 to 75 English miles) away from his residence; and Eisleben is just upon that number of miles distant from Mœhra.” (Besides it has been shown, historically, that there were no such year-markets in Eisleben at that time to go to) “What was the cause then,” continues the Pfarrer, “(since there is no reason in the story about the year-market)

in the dog-hole of John the Steadfast, not to cross the bar-bican on any pretence ; for they assured them that the

which induced Hans Luther with his wife and children—and with his wife too, be it remembered, far advanced in a state of pregnancy—to quit and utterly abandon Mœhra—the place of his birth, the home of his childhood, and the site of all his property? Some urge that it was to find a better means of livelihood for himself and his family—others allege that the mines in Mœhra, where Hans had already worked as a Slate-hewer (*Schiesse-hauer*), had come to a stand-still, and failed to yield, any longer, a sufficient subsistence. But, according to other (and better) information, it was just in the fifteenth century that the mines in the neighbourhood of Mœhra were in the greatest activity.” The Pfarrer then cites several old mining records—such as “*Heim's Heunberger Chronicles*” and “*Brückner's Kirchen und Schulenstaat*,” to substantiate this important fact. He shows, among other things, that in the years 1456 1492, and 1494 several church-bells were cast out of the ore obtained from the very mines at which Hans Luther is said to have worked previous to his quitting Mœhra. “From these documents,” then, he proceeds to say, “it may be plainly perceived that the mines in the neighbourhood of Mœhra were in a state of activity, not only in the fifteenth century, but even down to the middle of the sixteenth; so that it is impossible to discover why Hans Luther should have retired from Mœhra, and gone over to Eisleben to work as a miner, when he had already followed the same occupation in Kupfersuhl (half-an-hour's walk from his native village), and could have maintained himself by mining work as readily in his own neighbourhood as in Mansfeld. There must, therefore,” he adds, “have been some other cause to force Hans Luther to quit the vicinity of Mœhra. And what was this other cause?—what but the sad misfortune which befell him in that place, and of which

city fastassins would be called out on the instant that the Landgrave's troops attempted to enter the *Nicolai-thurm*.

"I did tell thee thou wast watched, man," whispered

the tradition is preserved among the peasants there, down to the present period."—*Mahra der Stammort Doctor Martin Luther*, pp. 110—114. Nor does it seem at all improbable to the author of the present work that a man of Hans Luther's violent temper should, under an impulse of passion, have been led to commit such an outrage as that before described, especially when the querulous state of the period in which he lived is considered in connexion with the querulous disposition of the man. Life-taking in these days is regarded as a very different affair from the petty offence it was considered in the middle ages. It has been shown in the text that a ploughman or swineherd's existence was valued at eight-fold less than a noble's little finger, and that the theft of a baron's hunting-dog was held to be a greater crime than the murder of a carpenter. All men carried either "*hirsch-fangers*"—hunting-knives or short swords—wherewith to defend themselves (and that the custom prevailed in particular among the Saxons, we know from the fact that the name of the race was derived from the *Seax*—the long knife or "hanger" they were accustomed to wear); so that with them in the olden times it was not a word and a blow, as with the pugnacious classes of our own day, but a word and a stab—as with the stiletto-bearing nations even of the present age. Moreover, we should remember that the right of private warfare existed in the nation up to the period of Martin's birth. Thus, in 1450 (only thirty-three years before the birth of Martin), a challenge was sent by the baker and domestics of the Margrave of Baden to several imperial cities; in 1471 again, the shoeblacks of the University of Leipzig defied the provost; and in 1477, a cook of Eppenstein, with his dependant

the white-wood toy-maker, by way of consolation, in Kunz' ear.

The confusion of the assembly now became greater than

scullions, challenged Otho, Count of Solms. The peculiar custom of the "right of diffidation," as it was called, or the settlement of private disputes by personal combat, or rather by war to the knife, had been the immemorial privilege of the nobles, and was resorted to on the most trivial occasions. Indeed we are told that the Lord of Frawenstein actually defied the entire city of Frankfort, because a young lady of that Stadt had refused to dance with his *uncle*! At such a period, therefore, it is not at all improbable that a man of Hans Luther's hasty and violent temper should have quarrelled with some of his neighbours and been led to fell some offending herdsman to the ground—even as the Mœhra tradition runs to this day. Such an incident would be true at least to Hans Luther's character, even though it might be untrue in fact. In all dramatic works, however, truth of character or spirit is far more important than mere truth of letter (which is often only factitious truth after all), since the evolution of the character and spirit of the people and times which the drama seeks to represent to the fancy is, or rather should be, the main object of the dramatist. But while seeking to be dramatic, the author has striven to avoid the terrible temptation of *melo-dramatism*. Indeed he has been thus elaborate in weighing all the *pros* and *cons* of the Mœhra tradition connected with the Luther family, in order to show that he has not distorted nature and history for the mere sake of effect. The blood-shedding is taken not only as the natural effect of such a character as that of the harsh and hasty, the rough and honest old Mansfeld miner living in such times, but the incident is also made the cause of the peculiar moody temper that Martin's father appears to have been subject to at particular periods.

ever. The more hasty of the citizens were for tolling the *Stadt-glocke* (town-bell), to summon the workmen to arms, and to drive the Landgrave's troops forcibly from the gates. But the calmer burghers bade the köhler and the blacksmith remain quietly in the house of the night-watch till midnight, and then quit by the secret passage under the town ditch.

But though the riot raged on every side of the tavern *saal*, Hans Luther sat with his head still buried in his lap, and his palms screening his countenance.

Gretha knew too well the cause of his grief not to feel a pity for his sufferings ; so she approached his side, and, stooping down, whispered some words of loving-kindness in his ear. And in a few minutes afterwards Hans and Gretha had slipped, unnoticed, from the room, and were in their little wagon again, on their way back to the mines.

"Unhappy Kunz !" sighed Gretha, as the cartwheels rumbled heavily over the drawbridge across the Hörsel, and she beheld the Landgrave's halberdmen seated on the dyers' tubs beside the stream as they lay in ambush for their prey.

Moreover, had not Martin inherited a considerable proportion of Hans' fire and impetuosity, together with the disposition to *beat down* all obstacles, the Reformation in Germany would probably never have been wrought by his means.

CHAPTER III.

HANS LUTHER'S MISTRUST.

THE roads were still heavy with the Easter fall of snow. The hedgeless earth had all the whiteness of a bride-cake: so white, indeed, was it, that the air itself looked as dark and almost as opaque as coal-smoke from the contrast; while the rivers and brooks that reticulated the broad plains of the Thuringian valley, as thickly as veins in marble, seemed to flow with ink rather than water, now that the green meadows were white as bleaching-grounds. The trees that flanked the roadway on either side of the outskirts of the town were cumbrous with the flock of the snowfall lying on their bare and bony boughs, and assumed the antiquated appearance of judges' wigs rather than lindens; while the fluffy little balls of birds that hopped so cheerlessly about, and left behind them a line of odd-looking trident marks in the solid foam upon the ground, seemed to have turned suddenly as blacky-grey as mice.

Then, as the wheels went heavily round, the little wagon moved along as silently as the sledge-carts that are generally used by the German peasants when the snow lies long upon the ground, and enveloped in a cloud of steam that reeked from the loins of the labouring horse; while the tires came up at each turn, with large flat clots sticking to them, as solid as the flakes of white sugar encrusting a fragment of bride-cake. Every bit of colour had been washed out, as it were, of the landscape; and the red worsted comforter of the muffled peasant as he trudged by, with a cloud of breath issuing, like so much smoke, from his mouth, and making a muff of his sleeves, was the only bright tint to be seen in the land.

Not a word was spoken in the gipsy-tent-like interior of the tilted wagon. Gretha sat on her chair at the front of the vehicle, with the cord-reins hanging, as loose as a skipping rope, from her hand; and her husband, far behind, with the curtains strapped tight together at the back, and with his elbows resting on his knees, and his face still shrouded with his palms, as he crouched down upon the footstool in one corner of the cart.

Gretha knew how moody Hans became, and how morose he always remained for awhile, whenever the remembrance of the dark deed, at which the frau had hinted, was sug-

gested to his mind; so she took no heed of the gloom that was on him, for she had long ago discovered that his grief was past the solace of words, and that time alone could be his soother. Accordingly, they jogged along the road by the Hörsel stream as silent as the very snow-drifts that surrounded them; excepting at the intervals when Gretha recognized some old familiar face at the doors they passed, and cried her greeting by the way to their former neighbours.

Nor was it till they had reached the walled town of Langensalza, and had to clamour at the closed gates for admission within the ramparts, that a word passed between the couple. Still the conversation never extended beyond the common-place ejaculations as to how dark it was (the fat-lamps that lighted the lane-like thoroughfares had long since died out), how late it was, as they heard the fire-watch, that was perched up in the steeple of the *Haupt-kirche*, bellow forth the hour with his cow's horn to the sleeping townsfolk.

Nor was Hans Luther more inclined to gossip at first on the morrow; for though Gretha, as they journeyed on again towards Mansfeld, tried to engage his mind by broaching a number of different subjects one after another, he answered so curtly to everything she said, that it was

evident he found no interest but in nursing the melancholy that was on him.

It was in vain she spoke to him of Kunz, and asked whether he thought the charcoal-burner would get free; in vain, too, that she sought to know if he had spoken with Johann Braun's nephew at the church; since all she got for her pains was a simple "Yea," or "Nay," no matter what the question she put to her husband.

"I'd give the world an my Martinchen," she exclaimed half to herself, "could grow up to be as highly looked after as the dead vicar of Eisenach! I'd fain see my son a good pastor rather than the most uplifted man in the land."

"And *I* would fain see him a land-wanderer and outcast, than a needless lump of a show-holy monk," growled the morose miner, from the back of the cart, as he overheard the mother's aspiration.

"Nay but, Hanschen," kindly remonstrated the wife, glad of the opportunity of enlisting him in a discussion on such a matter, "*all* monks and priests are not unrighteous men."

"Mayhap," muttered the husband, still with his head in his hands; "but the *seats* of their frocks do want patching far oftener than the *knees*."

"But thou thyself, Hanschen," again urged Gretha, as she saw the clouds were breaking from over her husband's brow, "didst say that thou wouldst not have stayed away from Johann Braun's death-mass—no! not 'for all the silver in the mines of Freiburg, were thy very words."

"Mayhap," the sullen miner again made answer; "but Johann Braun was the one halesome sheep that did escape the rot which is raging through the whole flock."

"But come thee hither, Hanschen," the goodwife went on, in a tender tone, "and set thee beside me, while we sift this stuff together; for oft have I yearned to talk with thee about our Martin's after-state, and it will be long again, maybe, ere I can have thee all to myself as now."

Then, rising from her seat, she led her husband to the chair, and placed herself on the footstool at his feet.

The miner was alive to the simple courteousness of the act, and he passed his hand over her cheek as he said, "I thank thee, mother; an a woman can raise the devil in a man, she knoweth how to lay the ugly ghost likewise."

"Now, Hanschen," said Gretha, fondly, as she rested her head on her husband's knee, and looked up in his face, "I do crave that one of our lads be brought up to the doing of God's work, and why wilt thou not let little Martin be that one? Thou knowest he is the quickest of

them all at his books, and as like to thyself as the grain is to the seed."

"Books make learned monks, not good pastors, mother," was the half tender reply. "I do tell thee, mother, I would fain see thy boy dead in body than so utterly dead and numb in heart as to make a mere bread-craft of what should be the most earnest and truthful business in life."

Gretha saw and dreaded the humour that was on her husband, so she said not a word in reply, for fear lest some stray expression might anger him, and fan the flame, rather than smother the fire of his rage. Nor did Hans speak for a while; so on they went, in silence again, for the next mile or two.

At length, as they passed through the town of Nordhausen, on their way back to Eisleben, it so happened that the priest of the place was out, with all the paraphernalia of silver cross and silken flag, and military-looking sacristan; while the reverend father himself was figged out in his fine lace robes and gold-embroidered mass-gown, and stalked at the head of a long train of peasants on their way to some distant shrine, far-famed for possessing one of the identical roses and lilies into which, according to the tradition, the angels had converted the lapful of

fragments of bread and cheese that St. Elizabeth had been about to distribute to the poor of the Thuringian forest, when, in dread of her stingy husband * (who had surprised her in the act), she declared she had nothing but flowers in her apron.

As the witless troop of crippled and diseased pilgrims went hobbling and chanting through the village, Hans drew up his wagon on one side of the narrow thoroughfare, to let them pass ; and the wife noted the while, as she made the sign of the cross on her bosom, how those who followed in the wake bore in their hands some long thick taper, that they were about to set up in front of the holy doll at the wayside altar, in the hope of being miraculously cured of their cancers, their scrofula, their gottres, their rheumatism, or their falling-sickness : for there was no need to ask the nature of their maladies, since many limped along on crutches, others went swathed in bandages, and others had big "crops" of pendulous flesh dangling from their neck, or ugly ulcers upon their cheeks ; while the hale carried waxen models of legs and breasts, or else tiny figures of babies, that they were about to hang up at the shrine, in token of the supernatural

* Ludowig, the fourth Landgrave of Wartburg.

cures that had been wrought upon them or theirs since they had kissed the sacred rose of St. Elizabeth, last year.

"Poor things!" cried Hans, as he tossed up his chin, half in pity and half in scorn. "And you'd have our Martin grow up to be like that old trickster at their head, Gretha?" he added, as the last of the pilgrim procession went squalling by.

Then, as the miner proceeded on his journey again, he shook his head slowly, while he said, "There be only one in that long train that doth not believe in the worth of the medicine they be about to swallow, and that be the dressed-up old quack-salver, who maketh a trade of the business. A little of thy nettle-tea, Gretha, would do the poor numskulls more good than a wagon-load of tallow candles burnt at the shrine; and *he* knows it, too."

"Oh, Hans, Hans!" cried the simple wife, "I fear me thou art growing an unbeliever."

"Unbeliever!" echoed the miner, with a faint laugh. "See, here, Gretha!" and he drew her closer to him, as he half whispered the words in her ear, "Didst thou not worry me, goodwife, into the buying of a grace-grant for the sin that is on me? and when the grace-chapman did come round to Eiseleben in his fine coach, and sent one of

his fine underlings to the burgomaster to let the folk know that the grace of God, as they said, was at their gates, did I not go out with the procession of priests, monks, and nuns ; town-councillors and guilds, with their banners flying ; men and women, young and old, and all bearing lighted tapers in our hands ; while the bells of the town rang out a peal, and the town-band played, as we went in a body to the gates to greet them ? And when the red cross of the right worshipful dealer in forgiveness had been set up in front of the altar, with the weapon-shield of the Holy Pope hanging from under it, did I not, after shriving, hasten with the rest of the half-witted folk to the ghostly huckster at the Lord's supper-table, who gave out to the people that he had heaven and everlasting happiness on sale there for a few ducats, and pay my eight golden pieces for the grace the holy haggler had come to hawk in the temple ?”

“Thou didst, Hans, and didst well, too,” the simple goodwife replied.

“Did I *well*, in sooth ?” asked her husband, scornfully. “And what got I for my ducats ? What but a God-slandering piece of sheepskin, that did make-believe to quit me of ‘all outrages, sins, and crimes that I might have wrought’ (so ran the lying words), ‘however great

and weighty they might have been ?' Did not the grace-letter promise, too, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that, 'in the hour of death the gates leading to the abode of the blest should be open to me ?'

"Well ?" asked Gretha, in all the innocence of true faith.

"*Well !*" repeated Hans, with such a thunder of scorn to enforce the word, that the poor startled wife fairly jumped again. "I tell thee it is damnable God-slander, every word of it !"

"Oh, Hans, you frighten me when this rage comes back to you," cried his wife, in anguish ; and then added, in a half-beseeching tone, "I pray thee do not speak so godlessly."

"For eight golden ducats the Jew-thieves did sell me the right to enter heaven, as if their grace-grant were a ticket to pass me into a show," railed on the miner ; "and yet thou seest the burden that is on me still. One little word that quickeneth the past again, thou knowest, is enough to strike me down for days. I would rather have thy Martin a foul leper, Gretha, than a wily monk ; so beware lest thou dost breed the sickness in him ; for if ever he doth put on the cowl . . . why, may God in his wrath smite him with some green pestilence, that may make his body and bones rot ! and——"

The mother dashed her palm upon the miner's mouth, and stopped the end of the angry sentence.

"I will *not* sit tamely by thee, Hans, and hear thee curse my child. Still, man! now I cry to thee. Still, I say! the little fellow is thine, as well as mine; and if *thou* dost not know thy duty as a father, let *me*, his mother, teach it thee!"

The miner was struck dumb with the justice and force of the maternal rebuke. His own conscience—for, harsh and violent as Hans was by nature, still he was by no means deficient in a sense of right—told him that the curse might as well have been left out; still he was too proud and unbending to acknowledge that he had transgressed the bounds of decency in his fury, and sat moody and taciturn, while he thrashed the horse the harder each time it seemed to flag or stumble.

Had not Gretha again been the first to make peace, they might, perhaps, have ridden on to Mansfeld without exchanging another word. As it happened, however, the wife herself was pained at the thought of her own vehemence after it had passed away; and when she saw how deeply she had wounded her husband, she stretched out her hand to him, and said,—

"Come, Hans! I did not mean to hurt thee; but I should be a poor wife to thee an I could have done other than I did."

The speech was quite enough to smoothe the miner's ruffled feathers; for if he was quick to anger, he was quite as quickly touched by any signs of contrition; and it was only when the pride of others would not allow them to bend to his own pride, that the temper of the man grew into obduracy.

"I was wrong, wife! very wrong!" he said, frankly, as he grasped the woman's hand, and squeezed it till the fingers were all creased and half numb with the pressure; "and I would as lief have cut my tongue out now as have spoken the words. But the curse," he added, with all the superstition of the time, "is noted down, and cannot be gainsayed."

"Let it pass," appended the mother, "as an idle, hasty threat, and give heed to it no more. And now I do yearn to speak to thee, Hans," she went on, tenderly, as she again laid her head upon his knee, "upon another sake, that hath for a long tide sorrowed me to mark."

Hans looked down in wonderment at his wife, as he waited for the explanation to come.

"I fear me, Hans, thou art not the same man of God and good Catholic that thou wert wont to be," began the wife, as she gazed full in her husband's face.

The miner merely smiled in reply.

"I do bethink me, good man, of our first-loving tide!" went on Gretha, half sorrowfully; "and how, when I was but a mere handmaid at the drinkhouse of the mineral baths by Moerha,* and thou wast wont to walk with me

* "Concerning the birth-place of Margaretha Luther," says the Rev. K. Krumhaar, in his account of *Luther's Vaterhaus in Mansfeld*, "there are many different versions given. Melancthon, in his *Life of Luther*, asserts that her family was originally from Eisenach, but that her father was born in Neustadt-on-the-Rhône, near Bai-reuth in Franconia." Audin, however, in his *Histoire de la Vie de Martin Luther*, gives a wholly different account, saying "Margaret Lindemann, Luther's mother, was originally a servant at the baths (the drink-house of the mineral waters), a virtuous, chaste, and God-fearing girl. She was considered the pride of Moerha."—P. 3. "His mother (Gretha, or Margaret Lindemann)," writes Michelet, "was the daughter of a tradesman of the same place (Moerha, near Eisenach, in Upper Saxony), or rather, according to a preferable tradition, of Nieustadt in Franconia."—*Life of Luther*, p. 2. D'Aubigné gives the following account, preferring to follow Melancthon:—"Hans Luther," he says, "married Margaret Lindemann, the daughter of an inhabitant of Neustadt, in the see of Wurzburg." . . . "Margaret," he adds, a little further on, quoting from Melancthon's *Vita Lutheri*, "possessed all the virtues that can adorn a good and pious woman. Her modesty, her fear of God, and her prayerful spirit, were particularly remarked. She was looked upon by the

there on the banks of the lake, thou didst ever beright me to be worshipful to the mighty God, and to tell my beads daily, and never to miss a month without trusting my sins and short-comings to the holy pastor's keep and leading. But now, Hans, I mark thou hast a sundered belief; thou never goest to shriving but once in the year, and that at

matrons of the neighbourhood as a model whom they should strive to imitate."—*Hist. Reform.* p. 50. ("*Intuebanturque in eam ceteræ honestæ mulieres, ut in exemplar virtutum,*" are Melancthon's own words.) Moreover, Martin Luther himself says, in the first volume of his *Epistles*, p. 390, "*Isenacum enim pene totam parentelam meam habet.*" The low Latin term, "*parentelam*" evidently implies that Martin referred as much to the relatives of his mother as father. It would appear, therefore, that Audin's account, taken in conjunction with Melancthon's, is the most probable: that the family of Margaretha or Gretha Lindemann belonged to Eisenach, and that the girl went thence to serve as waiting-maid at the drink-house of the mineral baths by Moerha, where Hans first saw, then loved, and ultimately wedded her.

Moreover, on going over a list of the town-councillors of Eisenach from the year 1247, which had been kindly lent me by Herr Roese, the over-burgomaster of that town, I found the following curious entry under the date 1406: "In this year Hans Lindemann, the probable grandfather of Luther on the mother's side, was made a burger of this city." According to the same document, Henr. Lindemann was elected one of the Scabeni (Schöppers) of the years 1493, 1501, and 1507. But as there is no note appended to this name, it is difficult to say whether or not he was the brother of Gretha Luther, and consequently the great Reformer's uncle.

Shrovetide—as thou must, to keep within the pale of the Church; thou dost often have flesh in thy soup in the long fast-tide; and thou hast always a hard unrighteous word to fling at the head of the holy brothers and fathers. Hans! Hans! thou art another man since thou didst give me this silver cross to wear about my neck;” and as she said the words she raised the token to her lips and kissed it, while she bent her head and dropped a tear upon her husband’s hand.

“Hast done, goodwife?” said the miner, quietly, and in a tenderer tone, too, than he had used of late. “In single sooth, then, wife, I have a sundered soul sithence.”


“I knew it,” she added, mournfully, “and oft have I begged Heaven’s help for thee.”

“Not that I have lost trust in God, sweetheart,” went on her partner, “not that I am a whit less true a Christian in my heart than in our trysting-tide, but that I do see what a beggarly handicraft God’s work hath become in the land; and I do hate the gold-grubbing throng that hath made a huckster’s stall of the Lord’s supper-table. ’Tis but bare two hundred years ago since Pope Boniface VIII. did vouchsafe a thorough grace-grant to all such as should make pilgrimage to Rome every hundredth year’s-feast; and then the godly folk did flock from every

land to the holy city, in such wise that twice a hundred thousand hands did come laden thitherwards, bringing rich gifts for the Pontiff's coffers. The gold-greed after that did fasten on the fathers so strong, that soon each jubel-feast was set for every fiftieth year; and at last for every one score years and five. Then the priests said to their flocks, 'An you cannot yourselves do the task put upon you, we, for so much alms for the poor, will take your heavy burden upon ourselves;' and thus, for the ease of the buyers and thrift of the sellers, both the jubel-feast and the grace that was to come of the pilgrimage were in the end forthborne from Rome to every market-place in Christendom."

"I cannot but cry shame on thee, Hans," plaintively urged the goodwife, with the tears in her eyes, "for thy slander of the holy men to whom God hath given the keeping and leading of our souls. Think what awaiteth thee if thou readest the text wrongly; and thou knowest that there be not a deed of man's, however fair it seemeth, that thou canst not besmut with an unworthy craving."

"I will not stay to gainsay thy words, Gretha," replied Hans, in a tone of calmness, "for I do not wish to take the trust out of thee, sweetheart, if it be a gladness to




thee still. Nor should I have spoken the words, wife, hadst thou not asked for the grounds of my new belief. So now thou must needs listen, while I do unburden my heart of all its long misgivings. But not alone did the grace-chapman undermine my trust, Gretha," he then went on, "but the sight of the holy bone-and-splinter hawkers did stir my soul against the double-faced yoke as well. For no sooner was it found how well the pilgrim-craft did thrive, and what grist a shrine well stored with old bones did bring to the priestly mill, than as many pilgrim-shops stocked with arms, shinbones, jawbones, and feet preserved in gold and silver boxes, did spring up in the land as there be hills, woods, and nooks, throughout Christendom. Whereupon all kinds of lies and tricks were got up to drain the numskull swarmers of their gains. At Trier, forsooth, they swindled the folk into the belief that there they could see the very coat without a seam that the Man-God himself did wear on earth; whilst at Rome they did mislead the fools to think that they might, on their bended knees, go up the self-same holy stairs as Jesus himself had trod, when he was led to the doom-hall of Pontius Pilate." *

* "In the year 359 the Emperor Constantius," says Brady, in his *Clavis*, "out of a presumed, and perhaps not inconsistent, respect,

"Hans! Hans! how durst thou speak with such godless mistrust of the holy particles?" exclaimed the wife, in all the horror of her zeal. "I fear to sit beside thee, man,

caused the remains of St. Andrew and St. Luke to be removed from their ancient place of interment to the temple of the twelve Apostles at Constantinople; and from that example the practice of searching for the bodies of saints and martyrs increased so rapidly, that in the year 386 we find almost the whole of the devotees engaged in that pursuit. Relics, of course, speedily became of considerable value; and as they were all alleged to possess peculiar virtues, no expense or labour was spared to provide such treasures for every public religious foundation. Hence innumerable 'translations' took place of the decayed members of reputed saints; and where the entire bodies could not be collected, the pious contented themselves with possessing such parts alone as '*Providence chose to bless them with.*' Without these sacred relics no establishment could expect to thrive; and so provident had the persons been who laboured in their collection, that there was not a single religious house which could not produce one or more of these invaluable remains. But unless we are to believe that most relics, like the holy cross itself, possessed the power of self-augmentation, we must either admit that some of our circumspect forefathers were imposed upon, or that St. John the Baptist had more heads than that of which he was so cruelly deprived, as well as several of their favourite saints having each kindly afforded them two or three skeletons of their precious bodies—circumstances that frequently occurred; 'because,' says Father John Feraud of Anecy, '*God was pleased so to multiply and reproduce them for the devotion of the faithful.*'

"Of the number of these relics that have been preserved," continues the *Clavis*, "it is useless to attempt a description; nor,



and hear thee say such words!" shuddered out the simple Gretchen, who expected that a wheel would come off the cart at least, and who was quite prepared for an earth

indeed, could they be detailed in many volumes: yet it may gratify curiosity to afford some brief account of such as were held in the greatest repute, viz. :—

" A splinter of Noah's ark.

" A finger of St. Andrew.

" A finger of St. John the Baptist.

" The thumb of St. Thomas.

" A tooth of our Lord.

" A rib of our Lord, or, as it is profanely styled, of the *Verbum caro factum*—the Word made flesh.

" The hem of our Lord's garment, which cured the deceased woman.

" The seamless coat of our Lord.

" A tear which our Lord shed over Lazarus. It was preserved by an angel, who gave it in a phial to Mary Magdalene.

" Two handkerchiefs, on which are impressions of our Saviour's face; the one sent by our Lord himself as a present to Agbarus, prince of Edessa; the other given at the time of the crucifixion to a holy woman named Veronica.

" Two sprigs from the rod with which the Saviour was scourged.

" A spine from the crown of thorns in which Christ was crucified.

" The crook in which the Son of God turned the water into wine at the bridal feast of Cana.

" The rod of Moses, with which he performed his miracles.

" A lock of hair of Mary Magdalene's.

" A hem of Joseph's garment.

quake to be got up expressly on the spot, so that she might see the ground yawn and swallow them, wagon, horse and all, into the very bowels of the earth.

She crossed herself, however, with the most fervent vigour, and muttered an "Ave Maria!" in the hope that this, like the sprinkling of holy water in a thunder-storm, might have the effect of warding off the shaft that she confidently looked for, every minute, to be hurled straight from heaven.

"I tell thee, Gretchen, our Church stinketh in the nostrils of every righteous man. The fleshpots have bred a mass of rottenness and grubs in it, till it hath no more life and health left than hath a mass of carrion. Of late,

"A feather of the Holy Ghost.

"A finger of the Holy Ghost (!).

"A feather of the Angel Gabriel.

"A finger of a cherub.

"The waterpots used at the marriage in Galilee.

"The slippers of the antediluvian Enoch.

"The coal that broiled St. Lawrence.

"The square buckler lined with red velvet, and the short sword, of St. Michael.

"A phial of the sweat of St. Michael when he contended with Satan.

"*Some of the rays of the star that appeared to the Magi (!).*

"Besides innumerable others, not sufficiently consistent with decency to be here described."

2007



Hans and Gretha Luther.

sweetheart, I will freely own to thee, I have read, unknown to any, Johann Huss the Boheme's rendering of Wycliffe the Englander's writings, against the sins and shortcomings of the priests; and though I cannot hold with them upon many things they do put forth—such as 'Gospel freedom,' and the like—still I cannot choose but grant they are right and true in many sakes and things."

"Woe to me!" groaned the goodwife, as she threw up her hands, "that I should live to hear my man side with the cursed shackles of the church!"

"'Shackles' thou callest them, Gretchen; "but the shackles were forged by them who treated poor Johann Huss like a true Bohemian goose, and roasted him." *

"And they did well," ejaculated the bigot wife, with all the zeal peculiar to her sex at the time; "for, in truth, the God-slanderers did fairly earn for themselves the end they met."

"A sorry shame on thee, woman as thou art, Gretchen, to say the words!" gravely retorted the Saxon miner; "for, think as thou wilt of Johann Huss—think him as

* The meaning of the word *Huss* in German is *goose*, and roast goose is a national dish in Bohemia. Hence Hans Luther's play upon the words—after the custom of the time.

wrong as I do in many things, still, what seemeth wrong to us did seem right to him; and he did fight bravely for the righteousness, and die most bravely for it, too. A lie might have snatched him from the stake; and though the priests that quelled him do get up their lies by the thousands, and reckoned them no sin when used for holy cheats, this poor Bohemian goose did like to be burnt rather than utter one."

"I *will not* stay by thy side, Hans, an thou wilt talk the wickedness thou dost," cried the shocked wife, as she started to her feet and denounced her husband, in a tone of such vehemence as Hans himself hardly believed her capable of. "Woe to me, and to thee, too, that thou shouldst ever come to bond with heretics and miscreants! And now I do say to thee, Hans, in *my* turn, that, mother as I am, I would rather sing the death-mass for the rest of all my little one's souls to-morrow, than that any one of them should live to think as ruefully as their father doth."

The storm had reached its highest pitch; the fever had come to a crisis; and the miner was loth, after so frantic an execration, to say another word to anger the mother.

"Come, Gretchen, this word-banding is unworthy of both of us," remonstrated Hans Luther, who was not only

tired of the strife, but, moreover, in no way disposed to exasperate his wife against him on such a subject: for, though he despised the priestly influence of the time, he knew too well the worldly power of it, and how dangerous it was to be suspected of free-thinking in such an age, as well as how easy it would be for the holy father to extract the secret of his heresy from his wife in the confidence of the confessional, if once she came to take his want of faith in the Church sorely to heart. So Hans said soothingly, "Let us end the strife here, mother. Do thou but plight me thy troth that thou wilt do nothing to lead our Martin to put on the cowl, and I will pledge thee mine that I will do all I can to make the boy a Christly man, even though I set my face against his becoming a priestly one."

"I will do so, an thou wilt pledge thyself to me thus much more, Hans," added Gretchen.

"Say on, goodwife," interposed the miner, as the woman paused ere she uttered the terms of the bond she was about to enjoin.

"That thou wilt never breathe a word of thy dreadful distrust to any of my little ones," was the stipulation; "and that thou thyself, Hans, wilt ever battle against it, as steadfastly as I will ask for God's help of thee in the strife."

CHAPTER IV.

PLANS FOR THE LIFE OF LITTLE MARTIN.

THE little wagon, by this time, was within but a short distance of the valley of Mansfeld. The miner's town of Eisleben had been reached, and, as they went through the hall gate, and saw the old house in the *Lange Gasse* where they had lived, Gretha turned her head aside to have a look at St. Peter's church, where her little Martin had been baptised; and when they came to the market-place where the fair had been held fourteen years ago, when she had made the same journey, she thought first of the time she had passed there, and then of her little babe himself, done up in his swaddling-clothes; for the picture of the infant came back to her mind as vividly as if it were but yesterday, with his tiny head, hardly bigger than an orange, enveloped in a close linen cap about the size of a white flap-rose (as the Germans call the poppy-flower), just peeping out of the opening in the pillow-like

"*steck-bed*"* upon which his father had carried him in his arms, like a crown upon a cushion, to St. Peter's church to be baptised, the day after he was born. She thought of his large violet eyes, and the little curls, like tiny locks of floss silk, upon his baby head : his exquisite little hands, with their mere dimples for knuckles, and nails that were like the smallest and pinkiest shells ; the deep creases in the plump flesh at every joint of his puck-like limbs, with the skin soft and blushy as rose-leaves the rolls of fat about his darling neck that she loved to rub her head in ; the thick, dumpy legs, too, with their round, dimpled balls of knees ; and his sweet, chubby, fairy feet.

Then she wondered how the little thing, whose image she now recalled so distinctly, and who couldn't, at that time, even put his tiny fist into his mouth of his own free will, could ever have grown to be the big, handy boy that her Martin had become. Yet the mother fancied, as she sat mentally comparing the picture of the babe and the youth, that she could still trace the sweet infant look in her youngster's large blue eyes ; and though the hair was

* Literally, the bed or cushion into which the swaddled infants in Germany are stuck or thrust, as a watch into a watch-pocket, whenever they are taken out for an airing.

less silky and less golden, it was still as "curly as a lamb's back." Nor had he outgrown the wild bursts of passion that had marked him even as a suckling ; neither was he less timid than when he used to turn his head, and hide his baby face under her arm, at the sight of every stranger that came near.

Next she wondered what kind of a man he would grow up to be ; and, now that the mother could no longer fancy that she saw her boy as she had hitherto loved to image him, with a shaven crown and a monk's cowl at his back ; she pictured him as a captain of the Miners' Guild, with his "hinder-apron" fastened at his back, his big, cartouche-like, leathern pockets at his hips, marching at the head of his corps, with their pick-axes all shouldered, on their way to offer up their prayers, previous to the wonted feast for the discovery of some rich vein of ore.

And yet, proud as Gretha felt as the ideal procession flitted through her brain, still she *sighed* over the dream ; and, with the sigh, the picture melted away from before her, and she beheld her Martin once more as she had long craved to see him, decked out in grand mass-gown and stole, amid all the glory and glitter of the altar, administering the sacrament to the Prince-Elector as, in his robes of state, the monarch knelt at her pet-boy's feet.

She sat for a time staring vacantly at the shadows of her own reverie, but at length the image was suddenly dispelled by her husband shaking her violently by the arm, as he cried, "Gretchen ! Gretchen ! what hath come to thee, woman ? I have been calling to thee for these five minutes past !"

"I was thinking of our Martin, father," answered the startled Gretha, waking up as if from a long sleep, "and wondering what is to be his lot in life."

"And shall I tell thee, mother, what the lot of thy Martin will truly be ?" asked Hans, somewhat tenderly.

The mother waited in silent anxiety for the reply.

"I have often bethought me upon the business, Gretchen, and have made up my mind now what to do with the youngster."

The miner slowly proceeded, while the mother sat on thorns, in her eagerness to learn what determination his father had come to.

"Thou knowest, mother," he went on, "that our smelting-ovens are only now beginning to answer as we had looked for. Gottlieb is now old enough to be put in the learning state of my own craft, and, from all I see and can deem from the money we do now get for the black copper, when the slate be smelted, I do reckon that, in

some half-score of years, there will be work enough to keep our two eldest boys, Gottlieb and Hermann, well at the business. Gottlieb, thou knowest, is always meek and ready to do my bidding ; and not because he is my first-born do I love him the most, but because he knoweth how to soothe my anger, and always striveth to hinder the rousing of it."

"Yea," said the goodwife, "he is, and ever hath been, thy house-lamb, father ; and even his little sisters know that Gottlieb and Barbara can do what they please with thee."

The miner smiled and shook his head, as much as to infer that he was by far too strong-minded to be led by his children, and then said,—

"But with our Martin, I will freely own to thee Gretchen, he is a boy of such mighty self-will and unbending mood, that he can heat me with a word or a look till I do feel a-fire with my rage, and so I have long bethought me that it would be better that Martin and I should be sundered, now that the child groweth a youth," Hans proceeded. "Besides, I have long marked the youngster's quickness, and fine wit and understanding, and wish him, therefore, to be better taught than the rest of his brothers."

The mother looked up in her husband's eyes, and smiled as she heard the words.

"Thou smilest to hear this, sweetheart," added the miner, "for if Gottlieb hath ever been my lamb-kin, least-wise Martin is thine."

"I love the boy for his skill at his books, and do long to see him the fine learned man that I know he hath the wit to become," the fond mother cried.

"And so thou shalt, Gretchen—so thou shalt," answered Hans Luther, as he shook her heartily by the hand.

"Oh! thank thee, father! thank thee for the blessed words!" exclaimed Gretchen, raising the miner's hand to her lips and kissing it gratefully. "I do yearn that one of my boys should be more learned than the rest, and it was half for that sake that I did wish thee to make a priest of the child. But, since thou art unwilling to do this, I would ask thee, father, of what good can this fine learning be to a youth in our walk of life? Will not the weight of the lore rather hinder than speed him on his way through the world, and teach him to feel more keenly the hardships of his lot, so that he will get to fret and writhe under it rather than to sit down bearsomely with the yoke about his neck?"

"Nay, mother," the miner made answer; "for it is my

will that the boy should grow up to be one of the council gentlemen of our town. I would rather live to see Martin a wise and righteous magistrate, like Conrad Cotta of Eisenach, than the prior of a monkery or the canon of a Domchurch ; and I have hope, from the mass of copper-plate we have got to smelt of late, that I may be able to spare the boy enough in some few years hence to buy him the house and land that he must needs hold, according to the law, ere he can be chosen by the townsfolk for the office."

"Dost think so, Hans ?" asked Gretha, as she still sat at her husband's feet, and smiled up in his face.

"But whither dost thou mean, father, to send Martin to get the learning he must have for so worshipful a calling?" the mother asked ; "for I have heard thee say, Hans, many a tide and oft, that the law doth rightfully ordain that no man shall sit on the doom-seat among us that hath not the knowledge to make him able for the trust."

"For some time that business hath worried me to settle, Gretha," the other continued ; "but now I have made up my mind to send the lad to the 'currend-school,' at Magdeburg, for I do hear it highly spoken of by our neighbour, Johann Reinicke, whose son, Hans, goeth thither this Easter tide ; and I mean our Martin to fare with him to that same school, please God."

"Oh, but, father, the currend-schools are beggars' nests; and many of the boys there, I have often heard, do find it hard to live upon the bread they get by singing at the burghers' doors," remonstrated Martin's mother, in horror, lest such a fate should await *her* child.

"Beggars or not beggars, thy boy can have no better teaching yet awhile," the miner answered her doggedly; "for, till the sum be all paid for our house and fields by Mansfeld, I cannot spare so much as a guilder for his lessons: and though thy boy will surely have to sing from door to door, beggar-like, for the food he needs to keep him at the school, nathless it is an old and worshipful wont among us." *

"I do know right well, father, that the learning got at

* The boys frequenting these old-fashioned German free-schools were called "*Currend Schüler*," a title which Dr. Croly, in the *Life of Luther* issued with the sanction of his name, explains as follows:—"The word *currend* is derived from the Latin *currere*, to run, and with the addition of *Schüler* (scholars), is applied to a company of boys found in Luther's early days in almost all considerable German towns, who *walked* (or *ran*) through the streets, singing hymns."—Page 41.

But this is by no means the right explanation of the title; for on referring to Adelung's *Wörterbuch*, we find the term *Currende* thus defined:—(1) "*Auf dem Lande in einigen Gegenden, der Umlauf in Kirchen-sachen, welcher von deen Küstern und Schulmeis-*

these same currend-schools is of a mighty ripe kind," went on the wife in reply, "and that many of our most learned popes and cardinals hath had none other cradle

tern von einem Dorfe zu dem anderm getragen-wird; ingleichen die blecherne Schachtel oder Buchse, worin der selbe verwahret wird. (2) Als ein Collectivum, arme Schüler, welche auf den Gassen um ein Almosen singen, und deren ganze Anstalt. 'In die currende gehen,' einer dieser Schüler seyn. Daher 'ein Currendaner' oder 'Currende-Schüler' der in die Currende gehet."—Vol. i. p. 1062. So that we see that a *Currende*, in old German, signified, in certain districts in the country, anything connected with church affairs that had to go the rounds of different parishes, and be carried from the sacristan of one village to that of another. It also stood for the *leaden cases or boxes in which the proceeds so obtained were stored*; and in a collective sense meant, further, the poor scholars who sang for alms in the streets, as well as the entire institution to which they belonged. Hence it is manifest that the term *Currende* was applied to such schools, not because the scholars "walked or ran" (as Dr. Croly vaguely suggests) through the streets, singing hymns, but because the word *currende* was borrowed from the Latin *Currendum*, and originally signified something to be taken round or circulated, like the poor-box by the sacristans among the parishioners, whilst it afterwards came to stand, first, for the poor-box itself, and next for the alms gathered in such a manner. And thus the *Currende-Schüle* meant merely a certain kind of *Charity school*; where the choir-boys were taught, and being allowed to sing outside the burghers' houses, were then sent round with such money-boxes (*Currende*) from house to house, to collect the funds for their maintenance, as is the custom, indeed, in Eisenach to this day, and where Martin Luther's little money-box is still to be seen, preserved up at the Wartburg.

for their wisdom and their lore. Nevertheless, it is hard for a mother to think that her child must go beg from door to door for every bit of bread he wanteth ; and she is

These institutions, doubtlessly, were very nearly equivalent to our parochial "charity schools" of the present day ; for the *currend* scholars were accustomed to sing in the church service, the same as the charity children with us ; though there was this difference between the two institutions, viz., that the *currendaners* had to collect the alms by which they were supported, whereas, with our charity boys, the collection is made for them. Moreover, at many of our public or (ancient monastic) schools there is generally some institution in connexion with them for maintaining some poor scholars ; such as the Bishop's boys at Westminster, and the *sizars* at Cambridge.

Most probably the institution of the *Currende-Schülen* in Germany arose from the fact that a number of boys were required to sing in the services of the churches and cathedrals of the larger towns, and these youths being paid for their services, the money given them came to be generally applied by their parents to their board and education by the priests, while they remained in the choir. Then owing to the beauty of many of the choir-boys' voices, they were doubtlessly encouraged by some of the townsfolk to sing outside their houses on certain occasions, by the distribution of a small dole to them ; and thus, in the course of time, the schools came to shape themselves into the half-begging and half self-supporting institutions that they appear to have been in the boyhood of Martin Luther. It has been suggested that the practice of alms gathering permitted at these schools originated with the begging friars, who wandered about from shrine to shrine, living upon what they collected at the houses of the rich by the way ; or that it was connected with the

but a sorry fosterer that would rather her boy had books to swallow than food."

"Come, come, Gretchen," said Hans kindly, "thou hast nought to fear. It will not harm thy boy to know how hard it is to get bread in the world when it's wanted; besides, our Martin hath a sweet windpipe of his own, and a song from him is sure to be worth a crust: moreover, mother, it will not be for long that the youngster will have to sing for his supper, for when the dole be all

institution of the *Bacchantes*, whose custom it was to sing their dithyrambs for alms at people's doors. But it certainly appears simpler to refer it merely to the requirements of the church choir-boys, and admit that it originally sprung out of the education which was given by the priests in exchange for the services of the boy-singers at mass, and with which afterwards the practice of singing in the streets for alms came to be connected.

After the Reformation the currind-scholars were formed into regular choir-singers, and they, like their prototypes, were allowed to sing at the doors of the wealthier citizens. The scholars were then maintained by some charitable institution or church fund, and traversed the streets on Sunday, Wednesday, and Saturday mornings, stopping at the doors of the clergymen and some members of the magistracy, and singing hymns appropriate to the days, while those on Sundays were chanted before the beginning of divine service. The currind-scholars were at this time admitted to the chapel-royal, and joined the choir; and indeed there is often some such institution to this day connected with our own cathedrals and abbeya.

handed over to the lord of the manor for our own smelting ovens, I do look forward to be able to pay for the youngster's schooling myself at the great university of Erfurt."

The mother's pride was charmed with the ambitious project for her boy. "'Tis right good of thee, Hans, to shape such plans for the little man's welfare; for at Erfurt he would mingle with the great of the land," she cried, while her eyes twinkled with joy at the thought.

"Yea, mother, and maybe we should have him betrothed to the sister of some one of his rich schoolmates, who would bring him as her brides-gift the house and land he must needs have ere he can be chosen one of the council-gentlemen of the town. Think of that, and let the forethought cheer thy heart," was all the miner had to say.*

* "Martin's weakness, his youth, the violence of his passions, all led Hans Luther to fear (if the lad ever became a monk), that when the first moment of enthusiasm was over *the idle habits of the cloister* would make the young man fall either into despair or some great sin. Hans *knew that this kind of life had already been the destruction of many*. Besides, he had formed very different plans for his son; he had *hoped that he would contract a rich and honourable marriage*."
—D'Aubigné's *Hist. Reform.* p. 57.

"Hans Luther," says the same author in another place, "wished to make his son a scholar. The day that was everywhere beginning

But the flush of the mother's pride was as transient as breath upon a mirror ; so that when the first glow of worldly ambition had faded from her heart she grew again half-melancholy with the idea of the frustration of her own pet scheme for her clever little son ; and answered gravely,—

“ Well, Hans, time will show an thou be'st building thy house upon the sand. Man doth forecast and God doth foredoom ; and what may be the doom in store for our Martin, neither thou nor I can say.”

“ Be that as it may, goodwife,” replied the husband, “ it is but right that I, as his father, should seek to shape his way towards what I believe to be the best ; and this night, ere I lay my head upon my own bolster, I shall kneel beside my boy's bed, and pray for God's blessing on the path I have hewn out for him, and then his doom is set. So do thou take this straw, Gretchen,” and as he

to dawn had penetrated even into the house of the Mansfeld miner, and there awakened ambitious thoughts. The remarkable disposition, the persevering application of his son, made Hans conceive the liveliest expectations. Accordingly, in the year 1479, when Martin had attained the age of fourteen, his father resolved to part with him, and send him to the Franciscan school (the *Currende-Schüle*) at Magdeburg. His mother was forced to consent, and Martin prepared to quit the paternal roof.”—*Ibid*, p. 51.

said the words Hans picked up a small haulm from the bottom of the cart, "and break it with me, and then let us strike hands together in token that thou wilt do nought to nether-throw my wishes."

The wife did as she was bidden, though with but a half-willing air; and when the miner had clashed his palm against hers he kissed her, and said,—

"I thank thee, mother, for I can see thou art still hankering after a cowl for thy boy. But come, goodwife, cut the thought out of thy heart, for thou knowest the madman I am in my anger; and if thou, or thy Martin, did try to thwart me in what I had laid down, why I feel that I am just the one to fling the boy from me for ever, with my curses on his head. Thou knowest how much happier we be than when I was a mere hewer of wood by Mœhra, and had the right to fell the timber as far as I could fling my axe into the forest."

"I know we *be* much happier, Hans," added the wife, "for thou hast long be-rued the day when thou in the madness of thy rage didst smite the herdsman dead to the earth, with one blow from the iron bit of the bridle that, unluckily, thou hadst in thine hand at the time. And I do call to mind the bitter anguish and the sore hardships that did come upon us after that, Hans," added the wife,

and she shook her head sorrowfully as she uttered the words.

The miner fell upon her neck, and cried aloud as he hid his face in her bosom.

“ Oh, Gretchen ! Gretchen ! why bring the ghastly dream back to me ? Why make me see that pool of gore upon the grass again, that seemeth to glow red as burning coals before my eyes ? Thou knowest I did strike the man down justly—thou knowest well I did go to seek our teamster in the Great Meadow and did find the animal nigh gored to death by the herdsman’s hound ; but neither the law nor the church can ever make clean my soul again, or take the scarlet stain of that herdsman’s blood out of my memory. Augh !” he shuddered as he turned aside, and pressed his palms into his eye-balls, “ there is no blinding one’s self against it. There it is, a bright crimson patch, clear as fire in the frost, with even my eyes shut ; and now it seems to run into a thousand fiery snakes ! Fright ! fright ! that can wring the sweat through the cold skin, and make the guilty feel as clammy as death—Oh, God, spare me ! spare me ! spare me !” he cried, while he shivered from head to foot, as though he had been chilled to his very marrow.

“ Hans ! Hans ! I did not mean to do this,” exclaimed

the wife. "I did forget me. Oh, do not give way thus! Come, come, good man, we are just by Mansfeld, and thou wilt have thy little ones waiting to shake thy hand, and cry 'welcome' to thee on thy return. See, yonder is the Water-gate; and there is Johann Reinecke's house in the 'Smelting House Street.' Arouse thee, Hans! we are at the end of the Lower Street and close under the Castle ramparts now. In another minute thou art at thy own doorsill. Thy children know nothing of this bloodshedding, and do not let them deem that thou hast ever done wrong in thy life. Come, arouse thee, I say!"

But though Gretchen shook the miner violently by the shoulders, he still sat a heavy lump, with his head down, so that it swung to and fro with every jolt of the cart; so on the wagon rumbled past the "Raben Gate" and up the narrow High Street, till at length the horse drew up of his own accord at the miner's door.

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CHAPTER V.

THE FRIGHTENED BOY.

HAD there been a society formed specially for the diffusion of comfort, rather than "useful knowledge," among the people, the conveniences, and even the minor luxuries of life, could not have been more widely disseminated than they have of late—as widely, indeed, as reading and writing, among every class of the community.

It is the sense of the solid and wholesome fare, as well as the warm and snug housing, the soft bed, the cosy fireplace, and the decent clothing, extended even to the paupers of our day, that prevents the imagination fully realising that most uncomfortable state of things which assuredly prevailed among the richest as well as the poorest members of society, throughout all nations, but a century or two since. Even the voluptuous Henry VIII. (he who met Francis I. on the Field of the Cloth of Gold) had no stockings to his feet, but wore ordinarily "cloth hose;" or, rather, what we should call long cloth gaiters,

to cover his lower extremities; and it was one of the charges raised against the elegant and sumptuous Becket, the archbishop of Canterbury, whose way of life is said to have been the "most splendid and opulent," while his tastes, amusements, and occupations were of the "most dainty and chivalrous" character—that "he had the floor of his dining-room strewn with clean straw or hay every morning in winter, and with fresh bulrushes or green branches every day in summer: in order that such of the knights that came to dine with him, as could not find room on the benches, might sit down and eat comfortably on the floor." The third Henry, again, was the first English king that ever had a shirt to his back—even as Catherine Howard was the first English queen that fastened her robes with more elegant appliances than "wooden skewers." Again, in the same reign, the royal bed consisted only of a litter of loose rushes and heather; and it was not until the close of the fifteenth century that straw was discarded from the sleeping apartments of the monarchs of this country. Nor was it until a century later that forks were used at table, even by the most refined and elegant—our present mode of feeding being an innovation brought from Venice in 1608, where it was the custom to provide each person at dinner with "an instrument to hold the

meat," it being considered ill manners among the refined Venetians to touch the viands with the fingers. Further, in the time of our third Edward, it was the fashion for families, even of the nobility, to sit round a closed chafing-dish by way of fire, the funnel of which passed through the ceiling, for chimneys were not known in the land till the beginning of the thirteenth century, before which time the logs were kindled on a stone in the centre of the floor, and the smoke allowed to ooze through a hole in the roof; whilst the common mode of lighting the houses of the gentry was by splinters of fatted wood, or by pans of burning grease.

Moreover, up to the reign of James I., the staple bread of the country was a coarse unleavened black mass of barley-meal (for, until 1634, yeast was not used by the English bakers); while it was only a century previous to that period that vegetables were introduced from Flanders, sugar having been generally eaten with the meat, "to correct its putrescency" before cabbages and salads became known among us, an event which did not happen till the year 1520. Cauliflowers, again (the "queen of vegetables," as they were originally called), were so rare a delicacy from Cyprus, that they were too expensive an article to be commonly sold at market till the reign of

Charles II. : nor did the people know the flavour of beans, peas, or lettuces up to the beginning of the seventeenth century ; whilst, as for the commoner kinds of fruits, they were generally unheard-of delicacies for more than fifteen hundred years after the birth of Christ. Apples, for instance, came to us originally from Syria in 1525. Strawberries from Flanders in 1530 ; and gooseberries from the same country a few years later. Currants from Corinth in 1533. Pears from various climes in 1562. Plums from Damascus in 1596 ; and walnuts from America in 1629. Whilst it was between the reigns of Henry VII. and that of Elizabeth that our present garden flowers were mostly introduced into England.

Nor was there a printed book in the world till the close of the fifteenth century ; neither was a carriage seen in our own country till 1553, nor a hackney conveyance till a hundred years afterwards, nor a mail coach till 1784, nor a watch till 1658 ; nor was even a cup of tea or coffee to be had in the land till the year 1641—1666, at which time the former article fetched as much as sixty shillings the pound.

Further, there was no manufacture of glass in England till 1557 ; and up to that time plates of horn filled the windows of almost all but those who could afford to pay

for the costly panes imported from Venice; and again, it was not till the middle of the sixteenth century, when Palissy the potter discovered the art of glazing earthenware, that the plates and dishes on which the food was served or eaten were anything but rude wooden platters, or else made of crockery about as elegant as pantiles.

Hence it will be seen that the dawn of "the age of comfort"—the golden age of civilized society—was in the beginning of the sixteenth century; and as the opening of our story dates from the end of the fifteenth "year-hundred," as the Germans say, it must be understood that the early days of Martin Luther were the days of straw beds and bare floors, of black bread, and of sugar eaten with meat instead of vegetables; of wooden platters; of no forks and no glass; of no stockings, no soap, no bonnets, and hardly any but wooden shoes; * of no coaches; no watches; no tea nor coffee; no fruit nor garden flowers; and scarcely any books.

The Luther home at Mansfeld was like an enormous

* Shoes as worn at present were not introduced till 1633. The nobility, however, wore a long, pointed-toe, velvet kind of slippers in the middle of the fifteenth century. These, however, were ultimately forbidden, on pain of being cursed by the clergy.

Irish cot. It was built in what has been termed expressively the "wattle and dab" style of architecture, and its large brown mud-walls stretched round a large quadrangular piece of ground, the square space in the middle of which formed the "*Hof*," as it is called, or rather that quarter-acre of slush or filth which generally constitutes a farm-yard. At the farther end of this extensive manure-depository stood the long tumble-down, desolate-looking barn where the Luther girls in the evening at the fall of the year were wont to sit and break the flax they had to spin into thread in the winter time.

On the two sides of this yard were ranged the cow-houses, sheep-sheds, piggeries, hen-roosts, and wood-bins ; while the long line of mud buildings facing the barn, with their back turned to the street, formed the dwelling apartments of the household—the doorway, with its tall flight of steps, leading to the raised and dingy kitchen, that served for the general living-room of the family, having its porch, which was as ample as that to a country church, turned towards the farm-yard, while the windows, opaque as a London fog, all looked out upon the same agreeable prospect. Here the front had been once lime-washed a sorrel-green colour, and the walls in places were bedaubed with rude attempts of the plasterer to *illuminate* the

spaces between the timber work designs of flower pots laden with blossoms that were probably meant for roses, but which appeared marvellously like kidneys, and also with devices of large yellow stars that were the image of monster daisies. Then there were quaint half-religious verses painted over the door in rude plasterer's spelling and peasant rhymes: such as,

“ This house is myne ;

“ It will be thyne :

“ SETT IT IN ORDER WHYLE THERE'S TYME : ”

with the name of Hans Luther and the date of the white-washing painted under it ; while immediately over the porch itself was a Latin inscription that had probably been supplied by George Emilius, the learned Rector of the Latin school on the market-place, to the following effect :

“ SIT PAX INTRANTIBUS, SALUS EUNDIBUS.” *

On the wall, again, facing the south, a large sundial was “ projected,” and this had the following passage from the Psalms set under it: “ BEHOLD, THOU HAST MADE MY DAYS, AS IT WERE, A SPAN LONG ; AND MINE AGE IS EVEN AS NOTHING IN RESPECT OF THEE ; AND VERILY EVERY MAN LIVING IS ALTOGETHER VANITY.”—*Psalm xxxix.*

* “ Peace to those entering, a blessing to those departing.”



be baked when finished ; while in one corner, apart from all the rest, the eye could just discern the figure of Dortchen in the dusk, with her wheel twinkling as she spun the flax thread that was to be sent to the town-weaver as soon as possible, so that the girls might get the linen bleached before the haymaking time came round ; and close beside the maiden sat another figure, that it was almost impossible to make out, ensconced, as it was, in the very darkest nook of the faintly-lighted apartment.

“ Holy Mary ! the thread’s broken again,” ejaculated Dortchen, as she uttered a half-scream and threw her apron over her head. Whereupon the others clapped their hands simultaneously, and laughed outright, for they knew well what was the penalty customary upon such a disaster.

And sure enough, the moment afterwards, the dark figure emerged from its obscurity, and dragging the apron from off the struggling girl’s head, made the apartment resound with the vigorous kiss he impressed upon her lips, after the manner of the people and the time.

“ Well done, Paul !” exclaimed the girls, as if with one voice, as they clapped their hands again ; for the gallant young gentleman was none other than Herr Mackenroth junior (the after husband of the maid), who had come

over from Weimar to spend the Easter feast-days with the family.

"But shamest thou not thyself, Dortchen," said Barbet, half-upbraiding her sister for her boldness; "thou art ever snapping thy threads when Herr Paul is here, and before Still-Friday (Good Friday) thou couldst spin the day long without any such mishap."

"I do wonder at *thee*, Barbet," retorted the blushing girl, "for when thou playest in the winter evenings at 'How do you like your neighbour?' thou dost ever answer 'Well' to Nicholas Denler, whenever he doth seat himself next to thee.

The sisterly chidings might have lasted, perhaps, till nightfall had not Martin, as he set the last stroke to the last letter of the greeting-tablet, began wondering what could make his brothers so late home from the smelting ovens.

"May be they be at the 'Golden King,' over the way, suggested young Mackenroth, "for there be a sausage feast there this evening."

"Yea, thou art right, Paul," replied Barbet, as she thrust the onion cake into the oven. "Verily our neighbours did kill their pig to-day, and I did see well nigh half the town go there to eat 'kettle-flesh,' and to drink

their 'wackworf,'* as the miners call it, for breakfast this morning."

"Shall I send them over, an they be there, cousin?" asked Paul, rising to depart; "for I have to pay for my bed at the inn ere I leave, and it is nigh time for the wagon to start for Eisleben."

"Ach gar!" cried Dortchen, with a sigh; "how fast the day hath flown!"

"Wilt thou be so good, Paul?" replied Barbet, "for Hermann did promise to bed up the kine for Dortchen to-night. The girl has to begin the half-year's wash to-morrow, and must be stirring at three in the morning. I know thou wilt not dislike the errand when it is to serve that sly little snapper of threads there."

The young couple looked at one another, and then the lad whispered something in the maiden's ear that set her eyes glistening, and made her lips curl with smiles.

Then followed the customary "Fare thee well," and "A pleasant journey to thee," and "Come back soon." And

* "Wackworf" is a German term corrupted from the verb *wegwerfen*, to throw away, and signifies in the vernacular any worthless or despised thing. The miners, however, in applying it to their glass of "*schnapps*" use it in another sense; i. e., a thing to be thrown off—down their throats.

then Dortchen retired alone with Paul to the porch, where more whispering and more tittering went on; after which a slight scuffle was heard, and then a sound, as if another thread had been broken, smote the ear; whereupon Dortchen rushed suddenly into the room, with her face crimson with blushes and her eyes half-glazed with tears.

The next minute the girl was with her head thrust out of the open window, gazing into the street.

Presently she cried, "Barbet, Paul is pointing to the end of the High Street, down by the Water-gate yonder. Oh, I see, it's Gottlieb and Hermann, looking out for father's return. He's running to them now," she added. And then the girl sat watching and watching, till the Eiseleben wagon drew up outside the Golden King; and when she had beheld it start on its journey, and saw it turn round the corner of the High Street, then, and not till then, she closed the casement and fell to spinning again, without uttering a word.

Nor was sister Dortchen the only sad soul in the Luther house that evening.

Martin had been dreading the return of his father as much as the other children were longing for it. The four days Hans and Gretha had been absent from home had

been almost the first four days of utter fearlessness that the boy had ever known in his life: he felt like one loosed from prison after a long incarceration; and while his brothers and sisters were counting the hours to the time of their parents' promised arrival, in expectation as to what presents they would bring them each, as remembrances of their beloved old town of Eisenach, Martin was watching the evening draw in with very different feelings—with the same emotions, indeed, as a young recruit sentenced to the lash watches the day break on the morning of his appointed punishment.

To Lena, as she sat beside the cradle that the little maid was rocking, while the boy was busy making her a neck-chain of the "snow-bells" and wild crocusses he had been to gather for her in the meadows, he confided the resolution he had formed, of retiring to bed before his father returned, so that he might avoid all chance of angering him, at least till the morning; and though the little sister begged her brother not to think of doing anything half so wicked as to go to rest without having his father's hand laid upon his head, the poor lad was too sorely afraid, lest the hand might be laid upon him in a harsher manner, to listen to her entreaties. Nor was it of any use reminding him, as the little thing did, of the times upon times his

father had dragged him from his bed to beat him for some fault discovered late at night, or telling the boy that the sure way to exasperate the old man was to let him fancy that a son of his was wanting in respect to him on his return; or entreating him to stay for her sake, and promising that she would shield him, and let her father know how he had helped Gottlieb and Hermann at the furnaces, and had milked the cow for Dortchen, and cut a whole "klafter" of wood for the smelting-ovens besides.

But all the little maid's beseechings were of no avail. Anything else Martin would gladly have done for her, but the poor lad felt that it would matter but little how good and attentive he might have been during his father's absence, if he only chanced to let fall a word or cast a glance that might offend him.

"Martin," said the little girl, whose hair was the colour of honey, and whose eyes, as she looked up in her brother's face, seemed almost as blue and dewy as the wild hyacinths that he was busy weaving for her, "if thou didst love father"—and she held her little forefinger up as she pretended to chide him—"thou wouldst not run from him as thou dost; and it be mighty wicked of any child not to love its elders, Martin, that it be."

"I know I do fear him, Lena," the lad answered sor-

rowfully; "and fear, thou knowest, little sister, as father doth always tell us, be the stepping-stone to honour and respect."

"Yea, but father loveth *thee*, Martin, I be sure," urged the maiden.

"I do hope so, Lena," added the other, "though he doth call me a crop-throat sometimes in his rage, and doth heat me so, that I do feel as though I were but a mass of flesh and bone, with an evil ghost within me for a soul. An I be beset with devils, as father oftentide doth tell me, Lena," he added, with a shake of the head, "it be a sin for him to love such as me."

"Oh! brother, brother!" cried the girl, flinging herself on his neck, "speak not so, I prithee, or I shall never close my eyes to-night for fear of the evil one—even though the priest did give me a bit of the embers whereon they did burn the blessed oil of the holy death-sacrament the last Saturday in Passion-week, and did tell me, that if I did but draw three black crosses with the charcoal on the door of my sleeping-chamber, no night-fiend could ever come about my bed. And thou knowest, brother, what the good priest doth tell us *must* be true," added the simple one.

But there was no time for an answer, for at this moment

Gottlieb, who had been out with a lantern watching for his father's return, ran shuffling into the kitchen, crying "The wagon be coming, girls; I did see it pass through the Water-gate erewhiles, and it be coming up the High Street now."

Immediately after the announcement, the whole family were astir making ready for the arrival of their parents, and, in the bustle, Martin would have slunk away unnoticed to his chamber, had not Lena clung to him, and begged her sisters to prevent him going to bed without his father's blessing.

One and all went to the boy and entreated him to stay—now warning him that his father would be sure to feel offended at such a slight, then crying shame upon him to think of such a thing, while another exclaimed, "Woe betide thee, boy! the doom be on thine own head!" Nor was Barbet the least vehement in her protestations that, if Martin turned his back upon his father at his own door-sill, she would be the last to stand between the old man and his wrath.

But the sound of the wheels and the hoofs clinking upon the stones in front of the house thrilled through the frame of the nervous boy—nervous, as he was, in the double sense of the word: at one time stricken down

almost to cravenness with *want* of nerve, and yet, at another, staunch as a martyr with his very *strength* of it—while the cracking of the cart-whip as the signal of approach filled him with such alarm, that, bursting from the grasp of the girls gathered about him, the poor, terrified lad, fled like a hare startled by the hounds from its form.

CHAPTER VI

"OLD BOGIES."

Now Martin Luther was what is usually called a strange boy—that is to say, he was a morbid boy—a dyspeptic bilious boy, who all his life was subject to pains and swim-mings in the head. He was continually tormented, as he himself told us in after life, with a noise and buzzing in the ears, just as though there was some wind tearing through the brain.*

* "My malady," he said at another time, "consists of a series of headaches, vertigoes, and so on, and is not natural; nothing I take remedies it in the slightest degree, though I implicitly obey my physician's directions." (*Table-Talk*, p. 210.) One day, a man who was afflicted with a loathsome disease was complaining to him of the terrors of it. "I should be very glad to change with you," he exclaimed, "and to give you ten florins into the bargain. You don't know what a horrible thing is this vertigo of mine. Here, all to-day I have not been able to read a letter through, nor even two or three lines of the Psalms consecutively. I have not got beyond more than three or four words, when buzz, buzz! the noise begins again, and often I am very near falling off my chair with the pain. But your disease—that's nothing!" (*Ibid*, p. 362.) "The devil,"

The temperament of Martin Luther belonged to that peculiar form which physicians term "melancholic," as tending to induce a corresponding temper of the mind; and he was marked by the same strange contradictions of nature as usually appertain to such characters: possessed of fine judgment upon ordinary matters, and yet subject at times to all kinds of false impressions, and even childish illusions; naturally religious, but distracted occasionally with the wildest doubts; trusting, and yet suspicious; full of veneration, and as full of scorn too; earnest to death, and yet dearly loving a jest; fiery as a blood-horse, though fond as a ringdove; indomitable and contrary in his temper, but still tractable and obliging in his affections; timid as a gazelle in his calmness, and yet fearless as a mastiff in his rage; at times morose as an owl, at others as full of music and gladness as a lark; now proud as Lucifer, and then meek and uncomplaining as the Man-God himself; wise far beyond his time, and yet even beneath his time in his superstition; hating tyranny as

he tells us in another place, after describing the buzzing in his ears as being like some wind tearing through his head, "has something to do with it." And again, in his *Table-Talk*, he assures us that there were one or two devils, in particular, "who kept watch upon him, and who used to seize hold of his head and torment him in that quarter, when they could not make their way to his heart."

devilry, and yet merciless against poor rebellious peasants; determined even to martyrdom, and still weak as a woman in a thunderstorm; nervous as a true poet, and yet as full of nerve as a great warrior;—no wonder that such a being should have been painted by his followers and enemies as the most heroic on the one hand, and on the other the most demoniac of human creatures.*

Poor Martin Luther, indeed, trembled between the most exalted intellect and the wildest folly. At one moment

* Cochläus, in his hostile life of the Reformer, gravely asserts that Luther was engendered by an incubus. An Italian, Cajetana Vicich, says, in a poem, that Martin was born of Megæra, one of the furies, and sent express from Hell into Germany. Many of his opponents designate him, "*son and disciple of the devil.*" The Papists generally reckon Luther the beast of the Apocalypse, and have seriously endeavoured to discover in his name the famous mystical number 666, adopting the following calculation:—M, 30; A, 1; R, 80; T, 100; I, 9; N, 40; —L, 20; A, 1; U, 200; T, 90; E, 15; R, 80 = 666. Gauricus, one of the Roman Catholic astrologers, who cast his nativity, but upon a wrong date, says, "Five planets—Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Mercury, to which may be added the Sun and Moon, being in conjunction under Scorpio, in the ninth station of the heavens, which the Arabians allotted to religion, made this Luther a sacreligious heretic, and a most bitter and profane enemy to the Christian faith. From the horoscope being directed to the conjunction of Mars, he died without any sense of religion. His soul, most impious, sailed to hell, there to be scourged for ever with the fiery whips of Alecto, Tisiphone, and Megæra."

he was startling his teachers with his fine sagacity and sterling common sense ; at another he was shuddering at the creatures of his own heated imagination, and believing himself possessed with devil and surrounded with imps.*

* Martin Luther, even when a grown man, had a devout belief in the worldly agency of evil spirits, and by no means a slight dash of the superstitious element in his constitution. The stories he is made to tell in his *Table-Talk* about the doing of "*Nires*" (water demons) and "*Kilkropffs*" (literally, children with a throat (*kehle*) as capacious as a crop, and who were vulgarly supposed to be *Wechselbalgs*," or changelings of the devil), startle us as to how a man of his learning and shrewdness could have remained in such utter ignorance as to the constitution of the universe, as well as the ordained sequence of events in the world without and within us—though, indeed, even Luther's spiritualism was not a whit less blasphemous and silly than the modern table-rappings, by which certain imbeciles believe that they can hold a kind of knuckle-bone correspondence with souls whose knuckles, and, indeed, every other bone in their bodies, must have long since been resolved into the elementary phosphoric acid and lime of which they were once composed.

"The devil sometimes steals human children," said our hero, in advanced years (*Tishreden*, 216): "it is not unfrequent for him to carry away infants within the first six weeks after their birth, and to substitute in their place imps, called in Latin '*suppositivii*,' and by the Saxons '*kilkropff*.'"

"Eight years ago," he then goes on to say, "I myself saw and touched, at Dessau, a child of this sort, which had no human

But though these delusions had mainly an organic origin, and were to be ascribed chiefly to the vertigoes and rush of blood into the brain, to which Martin was habitually

parents, but had proceeded from the devil. He was twelve years old, and in outward form exactly resembled ordinary children. He did nothing but eat, consuming as much every day as four hearty labourers or threshers could. In most external respects he was, as I have mentioned, just like other children; but if any one touched him he yelled out like a mad creature, and with a peculiar sort of scream. Whenever anything went wrong in the house—if there was any misfortune or accident, he danced about and shouted for joy; but when, on the other hand, matters proceeded smoothly, he was always weeping. I said to the Princes of Anhalt, with whom I was at the time," he then tells us, without the least compunction, "'If I had the ordering of things here I would have that child thrown into the Moldau, at the risk of being held its murderer.' But the Elector of Saxony and the princes were not of my opinion in the matter. I then told them, 'at all events, to have prayers offered up to God in the churches, beseeching that he would be pleased to remove the demon.' Prayers to that effect were accordingly said every day for a year, and at the end of that time the child died."

When Dr. Martin Luther had done relating this story, some one asked him, we are informed, how he could have made up his mind to throw the child into the river? "Why," he replied, "children like that are, in my opinion, a mere mass of flesh and bone, without any soul. The devil is quite capable of producing such things, just in the same way as he annihilates the faculties of men, when he possesses them corporeally, so as to deprive them of reason, and render them mentally blind and deaf for a period; just in the same

many instances, the priests themselves had seized upon the old pagan fables, and incorporated them with the religion of the time. Consequently the peasants, and espe-

Tischreden (p. 212), that "idiots, the lame, the blind, and the dumb, are men in whom devils have established themselves; and all the physicians," he says, "who heal these infirmities, as though they proceeded from natural causes, are ignorant blockheads, who know nothing about the power of the demon."

We should remember, however, that many of our "superior classes" of the present day have not a whit more knowledge of natural laws than is displayed in the terrible farago of superstition above quoted. Isn't Mrs. Namby-Pamby, the poetess, a clairvoyante? and are we not assured by her "well-informed" friends that she can see through a brick wall with her eyes shut? Has there not been lately published a volume of spiritual sketches by the lady of a Swedenborgian doctor, who, though she cannot handle a pencil in her ordinary state, has been made to draw beautifully (the long bow in particular) by supernatural agency? Do we not hear, day after day, that guitars laid upon a table are played by spiritual fingers—that ladies seated round a Pembroke have their ancles clutched by spiritual hands—that Mr. Hume, the American medium, is carried by spiritual porters up to the ceiling—and that three-legged "sofa-tables" are made to walk up-stairs by the same weird influence? Nor are these things, bear in mind, believed in by the class of servant-maids and bores, who are generally regarded as the only simpletons now-a-days who cling to the old faith in astrology, omens, presentiments, fetches, corpse-candles, ghosts, witches, goblins, fairies, and the whole of the stupid lumbering machinery by which the events of nature and life were formerly imagined to be regulated; but they are credited, remember, by so-called "educated"

cially those living near forests or among the mountains, were bred in the belief of Old Nick's Guardian Angels

and what are generally thought "clever" people—such as flashy poets, artists, playwrights, novelists, socialists, and even by some statesmen. Nevertheless, it is an indubitable fact that individuals may be lingually and digitally expert, and yet intellectually fatuous; they may even display some talent in rhyming, story-telling, sketching, writing farces, or making speeches, and still have about as much knowledge of natural phenomena and processes as charity children, and about the same enlightened idea as to the agency by which event succeeds event in nature, or the laws of sensation, thought, and feeling within us, as well as of the wondrous "imponderable agents" without us, as the sapient pig Toby himself. When our Herschels, Faradays, Owens, Murchisons, Brodies, Whewells, Mills, and others, who have given some little thought to the mechanism of nature, are convinced that more is to be learnt as to the ordinations of the Divine will by listening to raps upon a table than by the patient observation and inquiry into the works of creation, then it is quite time for men of sense to think such "manifestation" worthy of the least serious attention. Verily your "educated," novel-reading, and word-spinning fool of the present day is the greatest fool of all: as ignorant of everything that is real knowledge as a "buck-horse," and yet as loquacious as a magpie—and that, too, upon subjects upon which even the wisest "fear to tread." Perhaps the ape will not chatter chemistry with you, because he has never studied it; but he assuredly would talk "spiritualism" even with Fichte himself, and that even though he has never given a thought to distinguish clearly between the material and immaterial, nor troubled his head for a moment about the nature of the forces at work in the world about us. And yet this wonderful specimen of the "rational ani-

and St. Goar's,* which were merely the satyrs, dryads, and naiads of their pagan forefathers, dressed up by the Papists in the religious costume of the time.

mal," the modern "spiritualist" (who is but the *Asinis communis* of Linnæus in another skin) will not hesitate to set your common sense on edge with his blasphemous rubbish about the immortal spirit of man revisiting the world to the rap on tables at 10s. a *séance*.

The spiritualism of Martin Luther's time has passed away; people no longer believe that the devil can engender children, and cause imps to inhabit their bodies: but they *do* believe that morbid visionaries and ignorant old beldames have power to rouse any departed soul out of his immortal rest, and get the dead either to spell out some trumpery platitude about the future world, or else to pinch ladies' legs, jingle guitar strings, and pick phosphorescent flowers off the floor in the dark?

* According to the Catholic legend, Saint Goar (pronounced *Gowar*) was a holy hermit who first preached Christianity to the peasants and boatmen, dwelling around about the Lurlei on the Rhine, and who, to prove his divinity to the pagan population in those times, hung his mantle upon a sun-beam; since which date, the raft-men and others have continued to offer up prayers to the Saint for protection, while passing the dangerous rapids at that part of the river. The simple matter-of-fact explanation of this seeming miracle is, that *Gervin* is the German term for a whirlpool, and that the Catholic hermit, now bearing that name, was merely the pagan water-god, which was supposed to inhabit the rocky caves at the bottom of the river by the Lurlei, and whose mantle consisted of merely the clouds of water-mist which naturally descended upon the sun's rays. In the same manner, the story of St. Ursula and

Martin's father and mother had lived the greater part of their lives, before retiring to Mansfeld, at the foot of the Thuringian mountains, where the great "*Schnec-kopf*" (literally, snow-head) rises some 3000 feet above the level of the sea, and surrounded with the wilds of the Thuringian forests; whilst Martin himself had been born and

her eleven thousand virgins, who set out from England to make a pilgrimage to Rome, and were slaughtered on the way by a horde of barbarians from the East, refers to no less a personage than the old German idol "*Irmisul*," which it is well known represented the moon, that luminary, however, being typified as a great warrior by the ancient Teutonic; and, consequently, of the masculine gender! The name of the pagan deity required a feminine termination to be appended to it, in order to convert us to the equivalent of the Roman huntress Diana, and so fit it for the cognomen of the *chaste* Catholic Saint! Hence, *Irmisul*, or *Irmisulus*, as the idol was always called, was first changed into *Irmisula*, and ultimately abbreviated into *Arsula*, or *Ursula*, as it is now written. With this etymological explanation the key to the myth is self-evident. The moon appearing to the people of the Rhine to travel with her starry train in the direction from England towards Rome, the old mythological story of the *chaste* Diana, her hunting expeditions, was furbished up into the Catholic legend of the virgin English Princess setting out with eleven thousand other virgins on a pilgrimage to the Holy City; while the catastrophe of the whole company being ultimately slaughtered by a band of barbarians from the East, refers merely to the fact of the light of the moon, and its host of attendant stars, being extinguished by the rising of the sun.

bred at the foot of the Hartz mountains, where the monster Brocken, famed for its giant spectre, rears its stony head near upon three quarters of a mile above the ocean floor, where all the witches of Germany are said to dance on the summit of the Blocksberg on the night of the first of May, and where the woods and fastnesses at the close of the fifteenth century must have been almost primeval in their gloom and savage grandeur.

No people, we are told, were more superstitious than the Thuringians. The foresters talked continually of the doings of the Wild Hunter, and of the loves of Tanhauser and Venus—legends that are not entirely forgotten nor discredited by the peasantry to this day; and the legends of the Hartz mountains, again, are proverbial in all countries. All Germany, moreover, was rife with the stories of the tricks of the *kobolds*, or evil-spirits of the mines, from whom, indeed, it was customary to introduce a prayer into the German church-service, that “God would preserve miners and their works.”

Hans Luther, perhaps, had sufficient natural sense to laugh at many of these idle tales, though in days when books were as rare as natural philosophers, and when almost every natural event was supposed to have a supernatural cause, it is not very likely that a working miner,

like Hans, should have been the first to detect the falsity. Nevertheless it is certain that we have no reason to assume that Gretha was beyond putting credence in the legends and tales of kirkropffs, nixes, kobolds, and wild jägers that were then recounted in every chimney-corner; so that Martin most probably heard of such things at the same early age as our children hear their nursery-rhymes, and, hearing them told in perfect faith, received them in all the wondrous faith of childhood, and would have as soon thought of doubting the existence of his own brothers and sisters as that of "*shütz-engels*" (guardian angels).

Nor was this all. The only religion taught at that time was the religion of fear: the doctrine of the Church was everlasting damnation, unless you pay us to save you. The Almighty was merely another form of Saturn the creator and Saturn the destroyer, incorporated with Jove the thunderer. Even the Spirit of loving-kindness Himself was painted as the King of Terrors; for Martin tells us, that the pictures of the Redeemer in his day represented Him as seated on a rainbow, coming to judge the world with a sword in His hand and fire issuing from His mouth, as symbolical of His rage. Again, in one of his writings Luther says, that "I was from childhood so brought up, that I shrank from even the name of Christ. I was never

taught otherwise than that He was a harsh and stern governor. No one ever taught me anything else than that Christ would punish me severely for the slightest fault."

Is it to be wondered at, then, that such a boy, at such a time, with such a creed, should have lived a life of terror, and have seen apparitions of the demons he was continually dreading? Earnest and ardent as he naturally was, religion could never be to him a mere lip-service. Whatever it was, it must be another spirit to him, giving the tone to his life; and with the terrible creed of the day fast in his little heart, and the blood tearing like wind through his head, it was but the common course of nature that an imagination like his should have given a visible shape to the devils and evil spirits that he believed the air to teem with.

Little Martin, therefore, had been cradled, as it were, in the wierd, the mythic, and the chivalrous. His childhood had been spent, remember, in a country walled in with mountains and darkened with forests, in the days when all alike—gentle and simple, sages and boors—believed in bugaboos as devoutly as we do in telegrams—when every one had either heard or seen the wild huntsman with his hounds in full cry among the clouds—when nixes, undines, and lurlines were perceived or felt in the water—

when kobolds were found in the mines, wood-demons in the forests, fays in the flowers, air-ghosts (sylphs) in the atmosphere, and witches and killcropffs in the houses. The exploits of Arminius against the Romans, as set forth in the songs of the Minnesängers, inspired him, perhaps, with his first love of liberty, and made him long to be the Hermann of his day—the leader of the people against the "Romans" once more. Of the loves of Tanhauser and Venus he must have heard almost in his swaddling clothes; he must have seen, too, the old Saxon play of the mass-wanderers every Christmas, when children, dressed up as the devil, went round to the houses with a sack on the shoulder to take the naughty ones down below; and when the good angels used to come and drive the fiend away, and carry them to another mummer dressed as the Almighty, who gave them his blessing: besides, he must have been present over and over again, at Eisenach, at the Pagan mummer-feast of "*Sommer Gewinnung*" (Summer's Victory), and there have witnessed the devil and his imps, who represented Winter beaten and driven forth by the angel band, who were meant to personify the beauties of the coming time; in a word, his early life, his training, the stories that he heard, and the powers he was taught

to love and fear, were as different from the principles held up for our admiration as darkness differs from light ; and yet assuredly without them he would hardly have been the man he was—the Arminius of the Gospel.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FATHER'S RETURN.

THERE was a loud and rapid clattering of some half-dozen pairs of wooden shoes, worn by the younger members of the Luther family, followed by a cry of, "Here's father and mother come back!" as the little wagon was heard to draw up outside the door of the Mansfeld home.

The spinning-wheels of the girls were hushed in an instant. Gottlieb seized the wind-light, which he had placed in readiness beside the fire, and rushed with it flaming to the porch ; Hermann hurried from the shed, where he had been bedding up the cattle for the night ; Barbet hastened to the huge iron caldron that hung from a bracket within the capacious jaws of the chimney, and began to turn into the earthen pan the mess of sorrel soup and dumplings, after which she ran off to cut up into huge sippets the monster onion-cake that she had prepared for the evening meal ; "Dortchen" ran out with little Jacob dead asleep in her arms to offer her parents the bread and salt, after

the manner of the time ; and Ursula jumped on a stool to see that the wreath of ivy-leaves and moss encircling the inscription of " WELCOME " over the kitchen-door was still hanging as she had arranged it that morning, and then set to work to tidy the kitchen, and to get the spinning-wheels out of the way ; whilst little Lena trotted off after Gottlieb and Dorothy — her wooden slippers sounding along the hard earthen floor like the pattering of hoofs over a drawbridge. All the Luther children were up and doing something to welcome their parents home—all, indeed, but little Martin, who, as usual, had slunk away in dread of his father's return.*

The mother had scarcely leapt from the back of the wagon into her son Gottlieb's arms, than she said aside to Dorothy, while stooping to kiss the sleeping pet-boy carried by the girl, " Run thee, Dortchen, and tell sister Barbet to come and lead thy father to his sleeping-chamber. The long way-faring and the bitter east winds have given him the shooting-head-pains (megrim). Hie thee, too, Gottlieb, into the barn, and bring me a market-handful of the

* " Martin Luther," according to Audin, " had such fear of his father that he always hid in the chimney-corner when he had done anything to anger him."—*Histoire de la Vie et des Ecrits de Martin Luther.*

dried camomile, so that I may make the goodman a mash of the flowers there. And do thou, Hermann, go and hush thy little brother off to sleep again in his rocking-basket, while Dortchen seeth to the setting of the bowls for the evening meal." And as the children went pattering off upon their errands, the dame shouted after them, "Throw another log upon the hearth, girls; for I be chilled to the marrow with the night-wind."

The minute afterwards Barbara was on the door-step, hugging and whispering with her mother; and when the homely confab had ceased, Gretha said, half-aside to the girl, "Go thee to father, Barbetchen. Thou canst twist him like an osier-twigg, when he is as unbendable as an oaken-staff in my hands."

The command was barely uttered, ere the maid had clambered into the cart and was kneeling at her father's feet, as she fondled him and prattled to him in the loving language of a mother to her babe.

"And is the poor dad ill, then?" she went on, as she drew the old man's head towards her, and nestled it down on her shoulder. "Tell his Barbetchen whereabouts the pain 'is, and she'll soon drive it away; that she will. She'll make him some nice hot drinks, and light him a charcoal pan to warm his poor feet; for I swear they are

as cold as curds in a buttery," she added, as she thrust her hand down inside the old man's sabots: "and his head, too, of course, is as hot as a new loaf!" the girl exclaimed, laying her palm upon his brow. "Poor dad! but his own Barbet will take care of him. So come thee, lambkin! come thee, darling! and Barbetchen will help thee to thy resting-place." And talking thus by the way, she assisted the moody old man to place his foot on the bench that Gretha had set for him at the back of the cart.

Still the gloomy miner said not a word, but merely pressed the hand that was locked in his, in token of his thankfulness.

Whereupon the girl curled her arm about his waist, and as she led her parent through the kitchen, the children all rose respectfully and bowed or curtsied as they cried, "Good evening, father! Welcome back to the house!"

Then Dorothy stopped setting the wooden bowls and spoons upon the table, and ran to take her father's cap, and the leathern "*schweidel*," or hunting-pouch, that hung at his side; and Hermann stepped forth from the cradle-side to divest him of his sheepskin overcoat; while Ursula knelt down on the earth-floor to unlace his cow-hide leggings.

Little Lena, at the same time, ran to his side, and bobbed a curtesy, as she presented to her parent the horn of warm "white beer" they had got ready against his coming. But the miner waved the drink away, and placed his hand upon the little one's head, in token of his blessing for the night. Meanwhile, Barbet had beckoned Hermann towards her and whispered in his ear,—

"Go, bring a fresh bundle of rushes from the wood-house, darling, that I may make father a new bed up for the night."

And then, as Barbet handed the miner the pipkin of burning fat that did duty for a lamp, and the old man proceeded towards the ladder leading to the loft overhead, which served for his sleeping-chamber, the children all clustered about him, and bent their heads so that he might bless them, as he had done their little sister just before. After which the wife advanced, and crooking one knee, as a sign of submission to the head of the house, raised his right hand, and kissing it, cried, "Sleep thee right well, goodman!" whereupon the assembled children took up the cry, and said in one voice, "Sleep thee right well, father!"

Hans Luther, as he stood with his foot upon the lowermost "rung" of the ladder, cast his eyes round the little

gathering again and again, as if in quest of some well-known face, and then asked, angrily—

“But where is Martin? Is Martin Luther the only one of my children that cares not for his father’s blessing at nightfall? Go, send him to me. Woe betide the child that sleeps without it!”

The children stared aghast at one another. A stranger might easily have read in their affrighted features that something was amiss.

The father, however, was too sullen and morose to notice the commotion his inquiry and command had caused in the little household; besides he was too anxious to be alone to wait for any explanation; so he mounted the ladder and entered the loft, with Barbet, laden with a pan of hot embers, following close at his heels.

“I did tell thee, Dortchen,” said Hermann, in a whisper to his sister, “that father would be angered with Martin;” and the boy, with a deep sigh, threw to the floor the bundle of rushes he had pitchforked over his shoulder.

“Ay,” answered the girl between her teeth, as she strove to force the knife through the long lump of black rye-bread that stood upon the platter, “and I did say to Martin that it was fearful wicked of a child to shun the greeting of his parent at such a tide.”

"But thou knowest, Dortchen, it be harder to get our Martin to go the way thou wantest, than it be to drive swine," added Hermann, as he seated himself again beside the cradle.

"What dost thou think father will do with him?" asked little Lena, timidly, twitching her sister by the skirt.

The answer was cut short by the sight of Barbet descending the ladder.

"Has father asked again for Martin?" inquired the same frightened little maid. "Oh, get dad to go to bed, Barbetchen; do thee, good sister," she added, as the tears started to her eyes; "and then, maybe, he will have forgotten all about it on the morrow."

"Thou knowest not the man thy father is, child," chimed in the mother, who was on her knees beside the cradle, kissing her little sleeping lampkin there.

"What dost thou think he will do with him, mother?" again inquired the tender-hearted little thing; for brother Martin was her special favourite.

"Do with him!" the mother made answer, with a chuckle; why, beat him as a smith doth a bit of iron on the anvil: it needeth sore hard blows, girl, to mould such fiery metal into anything like form."

"But thou wilt beg for brother Martin this time, mother—oh, do, *do!*" sobbed the little maiden, as she flung her arms in a delirium of agony about her parent's neck.

But Gretha Luther had been educated in all the bigotry of the patriarchal and feudal creed of the time. She had been taught to regard disrespect to a parent as a heinous sin and crime. "Honour thy father and mother" was, in her mind, one of the foremost of God's commandments, and she would as lief have had a thief for a son as one who could insult the author of his existence: so, if she herself had beaten Martin, till the blood came, for the mere matter of a hazel-nut, it will be readily understood that she was scarcely the woman to screen him from what she regarded as the just punishment for a far more flagrant offence. For though she was by no means wanting in affection, she had still sufficient strength, and even sternness of nature, to prevent her woman's feelings interfering with the performance of her mother's duty. So she cast the little intermediary from her side as she cried aloud, in answer to the fond girl's entreaty,—

"That will I *not* do; nor do I care for the whimperers that ask me. An a child of mine doth forget its shouldings to its begetter, I will never so far forget *my* plighting to my man as to step between him and his just wrath."

Barbet was about to return with the rushes, when poor little Lena, seeing her preparing to mount the ladder with the bundle on her shoulder, ran towards her in her fright, and, nudging her elbow, said in an undertone,—

“Whisper, Barbet! whisper!”

The elder sister stooped down to hear the little one's secret.

“Tell father thou canst not find brother Martin an he doth bid thee seek him,” said the poor broken-hearted child in her sister's ear.

“What! tell father a lie!—Shame on thee, girl, to counsel me to such a thing!” exclaimed the elder daughter with a scowl.

“Martin! Martin, I say! How much oftener am I to ask for the boy?” roared the miner's voice from the loft.

And as Barbet began to mount the steps to her father's sleeping-chamber, little Lena darted frantically from the room below.

“There, father,” sighed the pet daughter, as she cast her load on the floor, “I have been as quick as I could; and with these nice dry rushes I will make thee such a bed as Prince Frederick the Wise hath not to lie upon.”

"Martin!" again shouted Hans Luther. "Had I fed a dog for so many years the beast would have yelped out his love for me at my door-sill," he added, savagely; and the next minute said tenderly, "Bless thee, my girl! thy fondness is the rich harvest that doth pay me well for all my husbanding of thee."

But the tenderness lasted only for the moment, for presently he demanded, in the same harsh tone as before, "But where is that thankless hound, thy brother? Where *is* he, I say? Dost hear me, girl? Am I to speak twice to a child of mine?"

"Yea, father, thou must—to the lad's sister," was the simple and just reply. "Wouldst thou have me eager to give Martin up into thy hands in the mood thou art? I will do what I should to thee, father, but I will do what I should to my brother as well."

"Good girl! good girl!" exclaimed the miner again, softened by the loving answer. "Go send the good-for-nothing to me, then. He's been at his devil's work again, has he? and fears to meet me. Go send him to me, I say—the scapegrace!—that I may scourge him till his blood doth make atonement for his sins."

"Wouldst thou have thy daughter play the catchpoll to

thy son, sir?" calmly asked the girl. "Think again, father, and I am sure thine own righteousness will not set me such a task."

"Ay, ay, thou hast too true and good a heart, girl, to be made a thief-catcher—in sooth thou hast," answered the appeased father, as he drew the maiden to him and pressed her to his bosom.

"A thief-catcher!" echoed Barbet, starting back from the old man's grasp, indignant that such a term should be applied to any brother of hers.

"Yea, *thief-catcher!*" bellowed Hans, again roused to a fury by the girl's opposition, as well as the sense of the fancied slight his boy had cast upon him. "'Tis the same blasphemy to break one of God's biddings as another. Is the thief more worthy than a reckless, heartless son? The one sunders merely the bond of ownership betwixt man and his money, girl; the other snaps those loving household ties that lie at the root of all men's fellowship. Honour thy father and mother, girl; and, by the God that did make the law, I'll teach thy stiff-necked brother Martin to bow his head to me."

"Seek, rather, to make him walk uprightly in thy presence, father, and to look thee in the face as his best friend, as thou hast taught me," expostulated the fearless girl.

"Nay, Barbet," replied the parent, touched at once by the affection and frankness of his pet child, "*I did not teach thee. Thine own heart, girl, was the only tutor thou didst ever have ; for, from thy earliest hour, thou didst always give me tenfold love for my love.*"

"And shall I tell thee why, sir ?" asked the maiden, as she proceeded to tie a wet cloth about the old man's brow.

The miner leant his head back and smiled up in the face of the maiden as she stood behind his seat.

"Why, because, good father, thou didst *begin* the love with me," she answered, stooping her head to kiss him ; "and I in common thankfulness and fairness, did merely give you back with interest the love I had borrowed from you. But with Martin, thou hast taught him to crouch before thee like a cur that ever dreads the lash. He flies at thy coming as a lamb doth that hath never been tamed by kindness."

"Flies at my coming, doth he ? I'll teach the coward to shun me !" once more raved the violent old miner. "Where is he now ? Tell me, I bid thee, girl !"

"Wouldst thou then, in sooth, have me backbite my own kin, father, I ask again ? I am here to soothe thee—to cool this burning head of thine—and not to heat it

worse by angering thee with tale-bearing against thine own children, so ill-sorted as thou art just now ; and thou wouldst hate me in the fairness of thy heart, I know thou wouldst, an I could do such a bidding. Come, let me chafe thy feet with this hot sacking ;” and the girl knelt down as she said the words, and, taking the folded cloth from the mouth of the charcoal-pan, proceeded to rub and wrap it about the old man’s ankles.

“Thank thee, dear girl ! My head is easier now ; I thank thee ! Would all my children were but as good and true as thou !” sighed Hans Luther, as he placed his palm upon the head of the one kneeling before him.

“Be thou as good and true to Martin as thou art to me, sir, and, trust me, the lad will be as good and true to thee as I. He fears, and I love thee ; he flies thee, and I come to thee at such tides as this ; he shudders at thy coming, whilst I and the others rush, with open arms, to greet thee,” spake out the honest, loving girl.

“Barbet,” said her father gravely, “thy mother dares not speak thus to me.”

“Mayhap,” answered the daughter ; and then, bowing her head, she added, “but I hope I am not heedless of what I owe thee, sir—and my brother too. But I do pray thee, good father, now that thy head be cooled, be-

think thee, why is Martin so unlike the rest of thy kindred ? ” pled the girl, still at her parent’s feet. “ That he doth boast the same flesh and blood as ourselves, the Lord hath stamped upon his build as unmistakably as he hath branded Israelite upon every Hebrew brow. Ask thyself, I beseech thee, is not the boy’s dread of thee thine own begetting ? ”

The old man said not a word, but withdrew his hand sullenly from his daughter’s grasp.

“ Thou dost bear in mind the tide, father, when Hermann did hunt that little parded kitten of ours with his cross-bow till it was like unto a wild-cat,” went on the girl, “ so that it did go and live up a tree in the meadow by itself, whilst the other little cubs of the same litter would climb upon your shoulder to rub their head against your cheek, and even lap from the same pan with the bloodhound, as if they knew not the nature-goad of fear ? ”

The girl paused for a second or two, and then asked gravely, as she looked up in her father’s eyes and shook her head to and fro,—

“ Were those tame kittens, father, better than the poor hunted and scared one ? Or was it Hermann’s fault that there was a wild thing, like a little tiger, among the breed ? ”

"Leave me, girl!" shouted the old man, as he started up from his seat. "Am I to sit still and hear my eldest daughter jibe me to my teeth? Quit the chamber, I say!" he thundered out a second time, as he stood erect with his chin in the air, scowling at the girl at his feet.

The respectful maiden rose and made a profound curtsy to her parent, after which she was proceeding silently towards the trap in the floor, when the miner roared again,—

"Come back here! is that the way to leave thy father at night-tide, child?"

"Thou didst bid me from thee, father, and I trust I shall ever be hearsome to thy word," was the modest and yet touching rebuke.

"Thou didst not mean to scoff me, Barbet?" the miner added, as the girl's submission assuaged him, and suggested something like an excuse for the sting to his paternal pride.

"I never wished to wound thee in my life, father," cried the girl, as she ran back and flung her head upon the old man's shoulder.

The confession was as soothing as the oil of the good Samaritan to the sores of the stricken one, and the man who but a few minutes since had been wild as a stag at bay, became as gentle as the far-famed tame deer that, in

Luther's time, belonged to the Prince-Elector at Wittenberg.*

"I am as weak as a reed, before the might of thy meekness," said the honest old miner, still half ashamed of the humoursomeness of his own nature. "An thy brother Martin were but as bowsome to my waywardness as thou art, girl, he might do with me as he pleased—even as thou dost, Barbetchen;" and he took the maiden's cheeks between his palms, and kissed her on the forehead again and again. "Come, tell me, child, now," he added, in another tone, "where is thy brother?"

"Pledge me thy troth, father, that my answer shall bring no harm upon the boy, and thou shalt not have to ask me twice," replied the daughter, as she pressed the old man down into his chair, and then turned round to spread the fresh rushes on the floor, that were to make him as fine a bed that night as even "the Prince-Elector himself had to sleep upon."

"Trust me, girl, thou hast nought to fear," added the miner, as he watched the maiden pitchfork the litter

* "This prince," says Melancthon, "had near Wittenberg a tame stag, which for many successive years went away, in the month of September, into the neighbouring forest, returning in October. When the Elector died the stag went away, and did not return."

about as though she were at work in a stable. Nor did he omit to note that the thoughtful girl had brought him another hide wherewith to cover his limbs.

"Well, father," returned Barbet, as she sprinkled the reeds from the end of the prongs, "Martin is where thou wilt be ere long."

"Where I shall be ere long!" echoed the father in a tone of wonderment and half fear.

"Yea," went on the girl, "where thou *must* be; for I have a mug of honey-posset brewing for thee below, and that thou must drink warm when thou art well wrapped up in the hide here."

There was no longer any mystery as to the girl's meaning; so the old man, as the truth burst upon him, stamped his foot violently on the floor, and ejaculated,—

"In bed! what—gone to rest without my blessing? Then let him take my curses in its stead!"

Now in the "good old feudal times," when children were but little better than vassals to the head of the house, who was looked upon as the lord-paramount of the clan, and when fealty and homage rather than affection and duty were the bonds that united the children to the parent, a "father's curse" was to every one—gentle and simple alike—the most terrible malediction that could be in-

voked upon any human being. The evil eye was no very agreeable spell for a person to have put upon him at a time when the wise and learned, as well as the ignorant and credulous, believed that vagabonds and outcasts had power to set aside the ordinary laws of nature, and to put any doom they wished upon another who had displeased them. Nor was a sense of bewitchment a particularly lively impression to go through the world with, when even the philosophers and divines, the judges and the doctors, were convinced that every old hag and beldame in the country who had a liking for black cats was in direct communication with the devil himself, and had only to request his Satanic Majesty to torment any human beings against whom she might have a spite, in order to have their bodies filled with pins or thorns, their bowels tied into all manner of knots, their muscles twisted into all kinds of cramps, and their entire anatomy made to swarm with imps as thickly as bats and owls in rain. In such superstitious and slavish days, a father's curse, we repeat, was regarded as the very acme of anathematizing—a ban that all the demons, hobgoblins, and cruel spirits in Pilate's Pond * were bound to carry out to the very farthest limits of malevolence.

* According to Martin Luther himself, this same Pilate's Pond and the Lake of Pottersberg were the special abodes of the evil

Poor Barbet was in an agony of horror when the bitter imprecation of her parent fell upon her ear. The pitchfork dropped from her hand, and she threw herself bodily upon the rushes, and buried her face in them as she shrieked, "Oh, father! father! call back the wicked words, or I shall never bear to look upon thee again! Mercy! mercy! I saw the black fiend in thine eyes as thou didst speak the ban. Come to me, and tell me the devil that was in thee just now hath left thy heart. Let me not think of thee as one beset, but as the good and righteous man I have ever known thee."

The old miner loved his favourite girl too dearly to be able to note her anguish unmoved; and now that the momentum of the angry paroxysm had passed off, his own sense of justice reminded him of the pledge he had given her.

spirits of Saxony and Switzerland. "In many countries," he says, in his *Tischreden*, p. 212, "there are particular places to which devils more particularly resort. In Prussia there is an infinite number of evil spirits. In Switzerland, on a high mountain not far from Lucerne, there is a lake they call Pilate's Pond, which the devil has fixed upon as one of the chief residences of his evil spirits, and they are there in awful numbers. In part of the country, at Pottersberg, there is a lake similarly cursed. *If you throw a stone into it a dreadful storm instantly arises, and the whole neighbouring district quakes to its centre. 'Tis the devils kept prisoners there who occasion this.*"

"Thou didst plight me thy troth," she went on, with her head still buried in the reeds, "that my words should bring no harm upon my brother, and yet I did make thee beshrew him! What greater harm could they bring upon him than thy curse? Ah, father! thou didst never break trust with me before."

"Be soothed, my girl! be soothed! I did forget me, and did err in my heat," said the old man, advancing to her, and kneeling down on the rushes beside the maiden. "There! there! I will go and ask a blessing on thy brother's head, even though he be asleep in his bed. His sheltering angel at least will hear me. Will *that* please thee, Barbet? Nay, turn not from me, child!" he added, mournfully, as he raised her in his arms. "Come, look at me, girl! thou'lt see no black fiend in mine eyes now. Thy tears have quenched my fire: thy holy words have scared the devil from my bosom. Look at me, Barbetchen—look at me!"

"Oh, yes; now thou seemest like thyself again, the same good and righteous man I have ever known thee," cried the daughter, as she beheld the old miner smile upon her: whereupon she flung herself about his neck and kissed him, as if she loved him more than ever. "Thou couldst not wilfully do wrong to any one, I know, dear father."

The miner shuddered as the words revived the sense of the wild tragedy in which he had borne so prominent a part ; for the wound, that the peasant-woman at Eisenach had torn open, was not yet sufficiently healed to make the girl's praise seem other than an ironical reproach to him : so, the more his daughter descanted on his goodness and justice, the more her words made his flesh creep with the consciousness of his own iniquity ; till at last, stung to the very core with her rhapsodies upon the stainlessness of his character, the miner burst away from her—eager to drown his remorse and self-abomination in the absorbing solace of prayer—and began to descend the ladder that led to the kitchen.

“ Here comes father, as I live ! ” cried Gottlieb, as he saw the miner's limbs dangling through the trap among the rafters ; and instantly every head was bent back and every eye turned towards the hole in the upper floor.

“ Where art thou going, man alive ? ” exclaimed the astounded Gretha, as she paused, with the upraised spoonful of sorrel soup in her hand.

“ To pray beside our Martin's bed, that the grace of God may be vouchsafed unto him,” was the laconic answer.

“ The Lord be praised ! ” added the goodwife, rising to

help him down the lower rungs : " thou art thyself again, Hans. I can summon back the tide when thou didst as much almost every night." *

The children all rose from the table as their father set his foot on the ground, and bowed or curtsied to him as before.

" The knave would not come to me to ask a blessing of me, so I must fain go to beseech a blessing for him," the miner explained, as he passed through the kitchen, with the lamp of burning fat in his hand, and left the several members of his family staring in wonder after him.

* Conrad Schlüsselburg tells us, in his *Oration upon the Life and Death of Martin Luther*, that his father would often kneel at his child's bedside and fervently pray aloud, begging the Lord that his son might remember His name, and one day contribute to the propagation of the truth.

CHAPTER VIII.

FLINT AND STEEL.

How shall we describe little Martin Luther's bed?

Have you ever visited the London "Asylums for the Houseless Poor," reader, and seen what are termed the "bunks" and "basils" there? *

* "Bunk," says Webster, is a word used in some parts of America for "a case or box of boards for a bed." The term is closely allied to the technical "Bunker," which, according to the same authority, is "a large bin or receptacle for various things, as coals," and which Jamieson defines as "(1) a *bench*, or sort of long low chest, that serves for a seat; and (2) a seat in a window, which also serves for a *chest*, opening with a lid," or, as a seaman would say, "a locker."

This word "bunk," then, is clearly the same as bank—a *bench* made to serve as a receptacle or chest, as is proved by the German *Bett-bank*, a press bedstead; i. e. one that admits of being shut up in a cupboard or chest.

The "bunks," however, above referred to, partake more of the character of the "bunker," or stall, than the box; that is to say, they are shallow bins or receptacles for bedding; or, indeed, a low box of boards, about as deep as a trunk-lid, and certainly having nothing like the profundity of a chest.

Little Martin's bed consisted literally of a "bunk" and a "basil,"—that is to say, in one corner of a loft at the back of the house "by Mansfeld," there were a few

The stalls or bunkers in a stable or cow-house are perhaps the most primitive notion we can form of the mediæval *bed-stead* (which was literally, as shown by the original meaning of the word, merely the *bed-place*, rather than as now the frame which supports the bed itself); but as advancing civilization made our forefathers grow alive to the inconvenience of sleeping in mere stalls or compartments, by way of separate beds, upon the bare ground, with nothing but a hide to keep them from the earth, the more luxurious and elegant among them came at length to prefer the refinement of reposing upon benches or chests at night; and hence, as the vulgar are known to be the conservators, not only of our ancient customs but of our olden tongue, the word "bunk," as significative of a bench or chest (*bank*), doubtlessly came to be expressive of the first *bedstead* upon which the nobles and the merchant-princes of former times delighted to rest their limbs during their slumbers.

Then, as for the primæval covering for the body at night, it is well known that it was the universal practice for mankind in the earliest ages to use merely the skins of beasts for bedclothes. This, indeed, was the custom of the early Greeks and Romans, and of the Britons before the Roman invasion. Now the word "basil," used above, is explained by Webster to signify "the skin of a sheep tanned." This was also written *basan*, which term came to us from the French *basane*, sheepskin, dressed and coloured red (*basanné*, tanned or coloured by the weather); and this, again, is connected with the Saxon *basu*, of or belonging to purple, which in its turn is only another dialectic form of basil (*βασιλικός*), regal imperial, since purple was formerly the colour worn by kings and officers of state; hence there is strong etymological reason to believe that the *basil*-

shelving planks raised some half-dozen inches above the floor, and upon these was strewn a litter of heather and broom, together with such reedy grass as could be readily cut from the waste lands in the neighbourhood, while a leather as extensive as a blacksmith's apron was all that served him for covering; and when duly rolled up in this for the night (for night-clothes were niceties then unheard of), the boy had very much the appearance of an enormous brown chrysalis, or, as he lay curled up, might have been mistaken for a gigantic German sausage.

Poor lad! the spring-time of his life had been one long winter of hardship and terror. The nobles in his days fared hardly so well as seamen on a long voyage now, and slept no better than the tramps in our straw-yards. What creature-comforts, then, could he, a poor miner's son, have known?

If Martin lived hard, however, it was some consolation to him that little Hans Reinecke, the goldsmith's son, who dwelt in the new market, fared not a cake nor a dumpling

leathers which now serve our vagrants or beggars for bedclothes in the modern refuges for the houseless, were originally the bright-coloured skins which monarchs and magistrates used to wrap about their bodies at night, long before the comfort of witneys and eider-downs was ever thought of.

more luxuriantly; if unleavened black rye-bread were sour and tough in the mouth, at least the town-councillor's children, he knew, had none sweeter, lighter, or whiter to eat; if wisps of straw about the bare legs in winter were but poor protections against the cold, why it was only the young Counts of Mansfeld that could boast the luxury of cloth-hose in that neighbourhood; and if a bunk and a basil were not exactly a bed of down, why the miner's son had never heard of anything softer than rushes to sleep upon, or of any coverlets warmer than cowhides; and so the hardship was not a particularly grievous one.

True, when he saw the burgomaster's son walk down the aisle of the church at masstime on Sundays in his velvet shoes with the long toes fastened by silver chains to the tops of his hose, and with his short sword strapped about his waist, little Martin would sigh and wish he had been born a burgomaster's son too. And when Hans Reinecke assured him that the lucky lad had had white beer and brawn for his breakfast, and ate sugar with his salted meat every day at the "mid-day meal," the simple miner's boy would wonder however the riches of a burgomaster could afford such luxuries.

Still, it was neither the bad food nor the bad housing that made up the hardship of Martin's early life; but,

unfortunately for him, he lived at a time when the education of a child was regarded very much in the light of breaking in a dog.

Have you ever seen, reader, a cur that has been well beaten come to his master's call? Have you noted how the haunches are depressed, and the tail curled tight between the legs? How the hind limbs are dragged along, doubled up close under the belly, that sweeps the ground; while as the poor beast shuffles shrinkingly forward, the head is hung down, and the ears are bent back like a hare's, till it gets within a few paces of its master's feet, where it lies flat upon the earth, with its nose in the dust crouching and shuddering, as if it already felt the anticipated blows?

Well! the feeling that binds such a dog to such a master was somewhat the same kind of sentiment as existed between Martin and Hans Luther. The poor boy had so often been called into the smelting-house by his father, merely to be "cow-hided," that he had got to dread the sound of his parent's voice; while he always shrank from approaching him, for he still smarted with a sense of his past blows, and the foretaste of future ones.

Nevertheless, Martin had no more resentment than a dog against the hand that wields the stick. He lived at

a time when such treatment was regarded as an act of stern duty and heroic love on the part of parents. "It hurt *them* far more than it did the child," was the popular theory: so Martin never dreamt in his sufferings of reviling his father, but blamed only himself as the cause of all his anguish. Indeed, to have fancied his parent could have erred in anything would have been tantamount to blasphemy to his mediæval mind. Nay, he would as soon have thought of reproaching the Alljust One for his pestilences, his thunderbolts and droughts, as upbraiding his parent for the scourging and penances he inflicted upon him.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This was painted up over the doorway of Hans Luther's kitchen. It was one of the first lessons the little fellow had learnt from his mother, and had said night after night on his knees with his tiny hands clasped, by his bedside, long before he could speak plain or understand what it all meant. And he *did* honour them: he bowed to his father whenever he came into his presence, or when he handed anything to him; he said "Good morning" to him the first in the house—in a word, he respected him, and obeyed him as abjectly and slavishly as your well-beaten cur always does its master.

But why should Martin specially have been singled out as the object of his father's wrath? If the old miner had been habitually or naturally cruel and despotic, *all* his children would have suffered alike at his hands. But the love and comparative frankness that the others exhibited in their father's presence set the mind wondering as to the cause of Martin's shunning him.

The simple reason was, that the rest of the family had more of the mother's than the father's quality in their nature: whilst Martin was, as the saying runs, a veritable "chip of the old block"—hard as an oak-knot, and as utterly unworkable when taken against the grain. Like his father, the marked idiosyncrasy of his being—mere child though he were—was force of character, force of mind, force of will, force of passion, and force of conscience, too. The thick bull-neck, the over-hanging bulldog-like jowl—he had inherited from the paternal side; and with them he had inherited, too, the determined, combative, and indomitable spirit of which they were merely the outward and visible signs.

Now, it is one of the marked peculiarities of all power, that there is no force without resistance; in a balloon, drifting with the wind, we have no sense of motion, nor any idea of a gale raging around us, while seated quietly

in the car,* even in the wildest hurricane. And yet the power, which is insensible when *yielded to*, and utterly powerless when the objects upon which it is brought to bear *go with it*, is lashed into the fury of a very demon, and fraught with all the might of the mightiest giant—laying a forest as easily as a reaper fells a field of corn, and tossing about the great mountains of water in the sea as if they were so many bubbles in the air, when it is steadfastly opposed.

This law, which is, as it were, the soul of all dynamics, is the *primum mobile* in morals also. The force of character that was peculiar to old Hans Luther, and made him the strong-minded, honest, independent man he was, had been reproduced in his son Martin, and this rendered the lad, almost in his infancy, ready to suffer a martyr-

* Mr. Green assured the author, when ascending with him from Vauxhall, that he had travelled across our island in his balloon from Liverpool to somewhere in Norfolk at the rate of nearly one hundred miles an hour, and yet was unconscious that there was the least breeze stirring till he reached the ground; and poor Albert Smith informed us, that when the balloon burst with him and Mr. Coxwell in the air, they were unable to tell that they were falling, except by small pieces of paper thrown out from the car, and then they found they were being precipitated to the earth at about the same rate as Miss Moyes when she threw herself from the top of the Monument.

dom rather than submit to any mere despotic power that might choose to assert supreme authority over him. And as Hans himself was powerless before the gentle and bending nature of his daughter Barbet, the girl ever yielding as gracefully as a harebell in the gale; so, too, Martin was weak as a *wickelkind* (a child in swaddling clothes) with the arms of little sister Lena twined about his neck.

CHAPTER IX.

TEMPERING THE BLADE.

MUCH as little Martin dreaded the dark, and the hobgoblins with which the night air always seemed to him to teem, he dreaded his father still more. The timid lad knew that by fleeing from his parent he would be sure to anger him, and yet he lacked the courage to meet him, and feared even the dark fiends less than he. Terror gave wings to his heels, and he flew up to the loft in which he slept, wildly as a sailor boy mounts the shrouds of a foundering vessel.

It was the work of but a minute to lower the trap in the floor by which he entered, and to throw himself on the litter that served for his bed in one corner of the dingy garret. The leathern coverlet was then drawn up tight over his head, so that he might shut out the sight and sound of everything around him. But the hide, thick as it was, was of no avail; for Martin could not only hear his heart beating in his bosom like a flail in a distant

barn, but he could distinguish at the same time every word that was uttered, and every foot that moved below; while each fresh noise set him trembling like some poor helpless sheep at the door of a slaughter-house, and the beads of perspiration burst through his skin as thick as dew-drops on the grass-blades in the sharp chill of an autumn morning.

A child's fright has far more anguish in it than even a child's pain; and Martin shook and quivered from head to foot, as though some convulsive throe was on him.

At first he prayed to the Virgin to take him, a poor boy, under her protection; and then he entreated St. Anna (the Virgin's mother, who was supposed to have special power in those days)* to watch over and befriend him in

* In Luther's time the reverence for "Holy St. Anna," the mother of the Virgin, was very great. At the end of the fifteenth century the worship of this saint became popular in the Romish Church: the brotherhood of St. Anna was then founded at Naumburg, and the highest burghers and councilmen belonged to the order. In 1495 a work was published at Leipzig, in praise of the virtues of the comparatively new idol. In 1494—1517 there were seven pamphlets printed explanatory of the virtues of the lady, and descriptive of the legends and traditions in connexion with her. She then came to be thought more highly of than the Virgin herself. The mountain site of Annaberg, in Silesia, and near the banks of the Oder, was dedicated to her honour. Luther, in a sermon of his, alludes


his tribulation ; but through all his prayers, loud and fervently though he breathed them, he could catch every syllable that was spoken in the kitchen.

“ Shield me with thy love, O, holy mother of God ! deign to open your heart to a little boy ! ” he would cry aloud ; and yet, as he said the words, he could overhear them telling one another below that father had come back ill.

“ And do thou, O, blessed Aloysius,” he would continue, “ thou who art the patron saint of children, soften my father’s heart ; ” and then suddenly he would break off as he started up in bed, exclaiming, “ What’s that ? Is it father’s step coming this way ? ” for such was the thought that stirred him.

“ Yet, no,” he would say to himself, as he began to

to an extraordinary miracle said to have been wrought by the saint in question. There was a child in Hesse, he tells us, who somehow or other had been dragged beneath a mill-wheel, and was crushed to death by the floats. The infant had been three days in the water, the tale ran, before the body was discovered. When it was taken out of the stream it was dedicated to St. Anna, and from that time it was restored to life, we are assured, and became sound and healthy ! The mountain site of Annaberg has on its summit a building which was formerly a Franciscan convent, and was said to contain a miraculous image, to which pilgrimages are made even to the present time, especially on St. Anna’s day.



breathe again, "he's gone into the kitchen, I can hear;" and then he would fall to praying once more. "O, beloved St. Elizabeth, thou who wert always so good to the poor, have pity upon a poor boy like me. Do thou change the rod in my father's hands into a flower-stem, even as the good angels did turn the bits of bread and cheese in thine apron into roses and lilies to shield thee from thy husband's wrath."

But the prayer was cut short by the sound of the old miner's voice shouting for Martin. The boy could hear his father say distinctly,—

"Why doth not Martin come to me? Where is Martin?"

And then the little fellow shook like one with the palsy, and called upon St. Bernard for succour.

Presently all was still. He heard Hermann come in with the bundle of clean rushes, that swept along the ground as he went, and Gottlieb fasten up the stable for the night: he could catch the sound of his brother's and sister's voices mumbling in the kitchen, and could tell that his mother, from the indignant tone in which she was speaking below, was angry with him for avoiding his father at such a time.

Nevertheless, the dreaded voice of the father himself was no longer to be heard; and as the boy's chest began

to heave less violently, he kept wondering what had come to the old man. He had not gone to bed yet, Martin knew, for he hadn't heard his father tell Gottlieb to get him his house-spear for the night; and the old man would never rest without having that by his bedside.

And then, as the boy's dread of his father began to subside a little, and he drew the leather from his head, so that he might hear the better what was going on downstairs, his nervousness assumed another form; for when he sat up in his bed and peered, while listening with all the tension of acute suspense, into the dark opaque mass of air that, as it encompassed him, seemed solid as a block of black marble, he began to see ugly, vague shadows, moving about in it; so his heart sank in his bosom again, like a stone in a well, and a cold sweat burst through his skin like damp upon the stones of a cave.

Poor fellow! it was but the blood buzzing in his head: still, to his distempered fancy the chamber appeared to swarm with the devil's imps, sent to haunt him.

He crossed himself, and muttered an "Ave Maria," but to no purpose.

He threw himself on his face, and pressed his knuckles into his eyeballs, as he cried aloud to Satan for pity—pity! He was faint as if with the sickness of death it-

self, and yet he could not rest ; for the whole place seemed alive with every kind of hideous living thing. The floor he thought was swarming with toads, lizards, huge beetles, scorpions, and sea-nettles ; he could see them wandering and writhing along in the darkness, as if they were the restless souls of purgatory. The air above was alive with night-owls and vampire-bats ; and “lightning-bugs” were playing about like *ignes fatui* in the dark ; while round his bed danced and grinned little bronze-green old men, and wen-throated children, with idiot heads and flesh as yellow as cheese. He could see tiny kobolds, too, glittering with all the colours of the mines—some iridescent as the peacock-coloured ore ; others blue as “azure copper ;” others golden as pyrites ; and others, again, blood-red as hæmatite ; and elves from the wood were there too—little earth-brown and gnarled things, with twisted legs like roots, and hair and eyebrows like moss, and smelling of fungus like a cellar. An incubus was on his chest ; the night-hag sat astride his ribs with her fingers at his throat ; he seemed bound with cords to the bed, and lacked the power even to move a limb or utter so much as a cry or a prayer for help. All will had been taken from him ; and thews and sinews, that before were supple as sensitive leaves, were now rigid as icicles. He lay gasping with the

terror that had seized upon him like a cataleptic fit, and yet, entranced as he was with fright, he was conscious of a faint rustling sound, as if there was somebody stealing about the room. "Yes! *there* was the noise again," he said to himself, as he turned round in his bed, and buried his head in the rushes.

The next minute he felt a hand fall upon his shoulder, and so lightly that the touch thrilled him through, for it seemed to be that of unearthly fingers. The frenzied lad moaned like a strong man under the surgeon's knife, and then cried aloud, "Satan, go forth! I will not give ear to thee;" and he was about to dash the figure from him when the loving arms of his little sister Lena were thrown around his neck, and the child sobbed out, "Oh, brother! brother! I be no devil. Why, thou art trembling like to a poor fish quivering on the grass. But come, Martin! come with me to father. Oh, do! *do*, dear brother," she said in a whisper, as she wept on his shoulder. "I did steal away from them all to save thee from the lash. Father is sore angered against thee and has asked for thee more than once; so prithee come, brother, and throw thyself at his feet ere it be too late."

But the terrified boy only shuddered and shrank from the little maid's touch; for he lacked the courage to go

and meet the blows with which he felt assured he would be received. He was like one waked out of a nightmare dream, and was not thoroughly convinced yet that the figure by his side was not some imp assuming the form of his sister Lena ; so he bade her say her *Pater-noster* ere he spoke a word with her.

“ I tell thee I heard father curse thee, Martin, and I did run to thee in dread the minute after,” cried the girl. “ I would say any prayer to save thee from such a ban as that. Oh ! come, brother, come ! and on thy bended knees get father to unsay the dreadful ill-wishing.”

Martin started up in his bed at the sound of the words and said, sorrowfully, “ Curse me, did he ? I knew as much, for all the imps out of Pilate’s Pond were in the room making merry here over such a doom. Curse me, did he ? Yea, I did feel it fall upon me like to a glance from the evil eye. ‘ Curse me, did he ? ’ reiterated the boy as he burst into tears and sobbed in company with the little sister, while he clasped her to him, as though she were the only loving thing left him in the world.

At this moment a golden gleam of light shone through the trap-door which Lena had left open upon entering the room ; and as the little maid saw the glare grow brighter and brighter she whispered in Martin’s ear, in a tone of

pathetic alarm : " Here be father coming to thee, Martin ! The holy mother of God have mercy on thee now." Whereupon the scared girl tore herself from her brother's arms, and ran and hid behind one of the sheaves of straw that were stored away in one corner of the loft.

The lad shrank under the leathern coverlet as he heard the old miner step from the ladder on to the floor.

It was but a few paces from the trap-door to Martin's bedside, and yet (as with one falling from a height) a long train of thoughts swept through the boy's mind in that little interval. He could hear each foot-fall as it drew nearer and nearer to his bed, and could see, even with his eyes shut, the light of the fat-lamp pervading the chamber. He fore-felt too the heavy blows that in a few seconds, he knew, would come raining down on his back. He dug his nails into his palms to give him courage to receive them ; and gnashed his teeth in the obduracy of his spirit, determined as he was not to utter a cry of anguish, nor an entreaty for mercy, let him be beaten as he may. He had borne the lash without a wince over and over again when the time came—much as he had dreaded it before—and the old man should see that he could bear cudgelling—ay, as patiently as an ass. And then the sullen lad, in expectation of the blows, bit his lip until the blood nearly came.

The father stood for a moment beside Martin's bed and looked down upon him, as he held the lamp over the boy, (who feigned to be asleep the while,) and then slowly placed the light on the floor beside him.

What an agony of suspense the poor lad suffered all this time no pen can tell. Little Lena, however, had too much curiosity in her fright to remain quiet in her hiding-place; so she peeped out cautiously from behind the sheaf, and, to her utter astonishment and delight, saw the old man proceed to kneel down, and then to raise his clasped hands, in supplication for a blessing on her brother.

What had come to her father? thought the child.

"May the Almighty God above bless thee and soften thy stubborn heart, thou foolish craven boy," began the old miner.

The incident was so utterly unlooked for by Martin, and so touching was it to the kindlier part of his nature to hear a prayer instead of receiving a blow from his parent, that his sullenness passed away as rapidly as the shadow of a cloud across a corn-field. He could have burst into tears and have thrown himself at his father's feet, had not the old miner at once proceeded:—

"Thou knowest, O Lord," he went on, while little Lena looked lovingly out from her hiding-place towards

him, "my son here did shun me this night, and lay his head upon his pillow without asking a blessing at his father's hands; and I have come here to him, in sight of Thee, to beseech his Heavenly Father to vouchsafe unto him that grace and good-will which he was too stiff-necked to beg of his earthly one."

The boy started up in his bed, and with his hands clasped and up-raised towards the miner cried out, as well as he could—for the sobs of his contrition nearly choked him—"Forgive me, father! forgive me! Thy goodness hath shamed me to my heart's core; and thy words of kindness do cut me to the quick more sharply than the lash."

Hans Luther was so startled by the rising of the boy that he drew suddenly back, and in so doing his eyes fell upon the ground, where in a corner, at a few paces beyond the little lamp that he had placed upon the floor but a moment since, he discovered the manuscript translation, by John Huss, of Wycliffe's heretical treatise, "On the Truth and Meaning of the Bible," a work which, it will be remembered, he had confessed to his wife, during their journey home, as having in his possession.

Now this work had been lent the old miner, as a great favour, by George Emilius, the rector of the Latin school on the Market Place of Mansfeld, with strict injunctions

that he would take the greatest possible care of it, and on no account let it go out of his hands. Indeed there were several reasons why such stipulations should have been enjoined. Not alone were books, in the earliest days of printing by moveable types, most costly luxuries, but this one was particularly precious, as well from its scarcity, owing to its having been proscribed by the Pope, as from the danger of possessing it in times when heresy was a crime, for which men were liable to suffer death at the stake. The Rector of the Latin school would not have trusted any other man than Hans Luther with the secret that he had such a work in his possession, so high an opinion had he of the old miner's integrity; and Hans himself had pledged his faith to Gretha, that very day, that his children should never come to know of his misgivings as to the holiness of the principles of the Catholic church.

The book, moreover, was an unmistakable one with a black wooden cover, carved with quaint devices, and ornamented with large silver clasps and corners, so that, when once seen, the eye could detect it again at the faintest glance. Hans Luther had kept it under lock and key in the old painted chest which stood in his own sleeping-chamber, so that he might read it in secret early and late

at his leisure. Before leaving Mansfeld for Eisenach, he had handed his keys over to Barbet, but in the hurry of his departure had forgotten to forbid the girl to send any one to the box in his absence.

Now it so happened that the day after the miner and his wife had left the house, the weaver had brought home a piece of the linen he had woven out of the flax thread with which the girls had supplied him; and thereupon Barbet had given Martin the keys and bade him carry the cloth up the ladder and stow it away in the linen-chest in his father's room, there to remain until bleaching-time.

The boy, as we have said, was as eager for books as his father was, and, upon lifting the lid of the chest, the sight of the curious old volume immediately fascinated him. Nor did Martin believe that his father set any special store upon the work. Hans had often taken books from the same depository, and lent them to his son, adding that he was glad to see Martin was so fond of learning. So the lad, in perfect innocence, marched away with the precious volume under his arm, and hurried off to his own loft to look over it there alone—forgetting in his eagerness even to hand the keys over to his sister again.

On reaching his chamber, Martin seated himself on the

edge of the "bunk" that served him for a bedstead, and began to scan the contents of the treasure he had carried off. Unfastening the clasps, he found, however, the writing so old-fashioned, and so utterly unlike the character he had been accustomed to read, that he was only able to make out here and there a word of it; and consequently had to content himself with gazing long at the one old picture with which it was illustrated.

This was a curious design, showing John Huss with his hands tied, and in his "heresiarch" cap with a devil painted on it, being led to the stake between two halberdmen. Beneath it was an inscription, saying that Huss was to taste the bitterest cup that man could drink, that he was to be handed over to the executioner to be burnt, and his ashes thrown into the Rhine.

But of this even Martin could only decipher a few of the principal words. These, however, were sufficient to enable the boy to make out the story, and there he sat staring at the drawing as if spell-bound,—wondering why they should have burnt the poor man, and what could be the meaning of the devil on his cap. Then he marvelled at the firmness and calmness portrayed in the queer little martyr's countenance, asking himself how could he ever have had strength to walk to the stake; and as he con-

tinued gazing at the picture, the boy would mentally ejaculate he was sure *he* could never have had courage enough to brave such a fate. Oh, no! he knew he was too craven at heart for that; and yet in his angry moments, he called to mind, he had sometimes felt as if he could meet any end—especially when being punished by his father for something that he knew to be unjust.

As Martin still sat pondering, now upon the waywardness, and now upon the nervousness of his own nature; then looking at the image before him, and speculating whether that brave old man had had such a stubborn spirit as he had when he was a boy—the sound of his sister's voice, calling for the keys which he had forgotten to return, aroused him from his reverie; so jumping up, hurriedly, he placed the book in one corner by his bed-side, so that he might look at it again when he went to rest, and see what more he could make out of the odd old volume.

Boy-like, however, when the novelty of the first sight of the curiosity had worn off, and he had his fill of the only picture in it, the book was thought of no more; so there it lay in the same corner as he had thrown it, till his father had caught sight of it, in the manner above described.

To a man of Hans Luther's violent temperament, such a

discovery was bitter wormwood and gall. A multitude of the wildest and fiercest thoughts crowded upon him, and made him tremble and grind his teeth in the paroxysm of his rage. He had broken faith with the rector—broken faith with his wife too. It would become known throughout the town that he read the works of heretics—he might be cited before the heads of the church, and forced to confess that George Emilius was the owner of the proscribed work—and then he and his friend would be utterly ruined. Moreover it was the last book he would have wished Martin to see, for he had no desire to have heretic doubts and misgivings engendered in his son's mind. Besides, he had the volume safe under lock and key, and the boy must have stolen it in his absence, for Barbet would never have given it out to him—these and a hundred other such maddening thoughts whirled through his brain in an instant, and the old miner blanched with passion as he seized the dog-chain which was used to fasten their blood-hound to his kennel, before the Count of Mansfeld had ordered the animal to be shot, and which hung there in readiness against the wall ; and then shouting “ Thief ! thief ! I'll teach thee to keep thy fingers from picking and stealing,” he struck the bewildered boy heavily with the

iron links over the leathern coverlet under which he shrank once more.

Martin thought his father had gone suddenly frantic, so unaccountable to him was the abrupt transition from blessing to beating him. The boy, however, was not allowed to remain long in a state of mystery, for the next minute the father seized him by the throat and dragged him from his bed, demanding, as he shook his fore-finger in the direction of the volume on the floor, until the chain that dangled from his hand rattled like a convict's irons, "Where didst thou get *that* book, thou devil's imp! Am I to live to have a child of mine rob me when my back is turned?"

The abashed boy hung his head, and had no time to explain, for the maddened father cried again, "Thief! thief! but I'll cut this itching palm from thy body, if I die for it;" and so saying, he began to smite him again and again with the metal lash, the blows falling so heavily and fast upon the poor lad's sides, as the father held him by the shoulder, that, writhing with the pain, Martin burst with a bound from the miner's grip; and then away they went, round and round the loft, the father hitting at the boy as he fled before him, and little Lena crying and



Young Martin Luther Accused of Theft.



shrieking at their heels; until at length, as Martin was about to escape down the trap-door, the old man raised the massive curb-chain, and struck him so violently over the head, that the blood spirted forth, and the boy fell senseless from the top of the ladder to the bottom.

“ Oh, Hans ! Hans ! what madness is upon thee now ? ” cried the mother from below to her husband in the loft, as she tossed her arms above her head in the wildness of despair ; for the whole family had been roused by the screams of little Lena, and they had only just reached the spot in time to see the bleeding body of poor Martin fall a half-lifeless lump at their feet.

“ Father, father, for Heaven’s sake come down to us,” cried Barbet, as she prepared to mount the ladder.

The other girls, Ursula and Dorothea, knelt down to raise the head of their bleeding brother, and then pillowed it on their lap, while the mother stooped over her poor boy and hastened to bathe his forehead, crying the while, as she washed the blood from his hair, “ Martin ! my darling Martinchen ! look at me ! Oh, nothing in Heaven or earth can make *this* righteous of thee, Hans. This is not chastisement, but savagery. Woe betide the day,” she added, as the hot tears of the woman fell thick and fast

upon the cheeks of her son, "that I should live to blame my man before his own kindred!"

Then, as the miner descended the ladder in company with Barbet, who carried the terrified little Lena in her arms, the mother started to her feet, and drawing herself up erect, said, in an indignant voice, "How darest thou, sirrah, use child of mine worse than thou wouldst have treated our old blood-hound? Thou wast sore at heart when thou didst see thy dog lie dead and bleeding at thy feet, and yet thou hast not so much as a sigh to breathe, but can scowl, at thou dost now, over thine own bloody handiwork here. Oh, Martin! Martin! my own dear boy, look at me once more! Madman, thou hast killed my child in thy boorish rage. Go forth! go forth, I say, man! I shall never bear to look upon thy face again," she raved for a moment, and then added, in a loving, heart-broken tone, "Dear, quick-witted, fine-spirited little fellow that he was," as she bent down to tend him once more; and the next minute looking up scornfully towards Hans, she sobbed out, "I must hate thee everlastingly, Hans Luther, for this."

The daughters were too terrified at the scene to utter a word, with the exception of the elder girl, and she said,

soothingly, "Mother, surely thou dost forget thyself before us."

The old miner stood for a moment looking doggedly at the woman, and then glanced half-sorrowfully at the ugly scalp-wound that he had inflicted upon the boy. Had the old miner been alone with the little fellow, he might have felt more grief than he did (for he assuredly never intended to half-kill the lad); but the stern pride of his heart would not allow him to show the least penitence for the suffering he had inflicted upon him after the railing of his wife. So he merely said, haughtily, "Hold thy mouth, woman! thou speakest without knowledge of the child's misdeeds;" and then passed on towards the kitchen, bidding Barbet follow him.

When Hans and the girl had entered the room, he took some "corn-brandý wine," as the ordinary spirit of Germany is called, and mixing it in a horn of water, bade her make Martin drink a little of that. The boy was faint, he said, from the force of the head-blow, adding, in the next breath, "I did not mean, girl, to strike him there and wound him so sorely."

The maid was hastening on her errand, when the miner called her back, and bade her bring her brother to the kitchen, and spread a hide for him on the settle.

Barbet nodded and hurried off along the gallery that stretched round the outside of the building after the manner of old-fashioned hostelries; but she had not gone far before she heard her father's voice shouting after her once more, so she turned back again, to learn what there was still to do.

"Tell thy mother to come to me, Barbet," ran the command; "I wish to speak with her alone."

CHAPTER X.

THE STUBBORN YOUNG MARTYR.

THE sisters were left to attend to their brother Martin, when he had so far recovered from the stupor occasioned by the heavy blow as to be able to open his eyes, and to kiss them as they leant down to whisper some word of kindness or solace in his ear ; while the father and mother retired to the sleeping-chamber above to talk over the recent occurrence.

The miner closed the trap-door, so that their conversation might not be overheard by the children below ; and then began,—“ I did not summon thee here to chide thee, Gretha, for thy want of worshipfulness to me before thy children, for I know it was thy mother’s heart that spake then, and not thy mother’s wisdom ; but I did summon thee to tell thee calmly of thy boy’s ill-doings, and to ask thee what thou wouldst have me do to make him rue his sin.”

“ Speak on,” said the wife coldly, “ I will be as listful

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as thou couldst wish. Thou dost like a hearsome wife, thou dost ever say."

"Thou knowest, Gretha," continued the old man in a mild voice, without heeding the little jibes, "I did make known to thee this morning, in the frankness of our talk, that I had lately read John Huss' renderings of the writings of Wycliffe, the Engländer; whereupon thou didst make me plight my troth to thee that I would never let any of thy children hear of such men's doubts and misgivings as to the holiness of our Catholic Church."

The zealot mother looked aghast at the miner, as she almost forestalled what he had to tell her. "And where didst thou keep the accursed book?" she asked wildly.

"Safe under lock and key, as I did give my word to him from whom I borrowed it," was the grave response.

"And what was the name of him who lent the devil's quibblings to thee?" indignantly demanded Gretha. "Tell me, that I may speak it out to the holy fathers as one of the vile shackles to our blessed faith."

"Dost thou take me for a swindler, Gretha," calmly inquired the miner, "that thou wouldst have me betray my friend?"

"Heretics deserve no better lot. Are we to bandy

righteousness with the unrighteous?" inquired the wife scornfully, with all the casuistry of the Jesuit tribe.

"I have another belief, thank God," ran the reply of the honest old miner; "but this is wide of what I would say to thee. I did tell thee," he resumed, "the book was kept fast under lock in yonder chest."

The mother interrupted sorrowfully, "I can see the upshot of thy story, Hans. Martin did get it away while we were from home."

"Ay, mother, our child did *steal* it," said Hans in a sorrowful tone, "while our backs were turned (for I did find it lying by his bedside); and now I would ask of thee, mother as thou art, did I wrong to beat the child for such a fault?"

The word "*wrong*" was echoed by the woman with a double emphasis. "Wrong!" she asked sarcastically; nay, thou didst right well, Hans. For such outrageous sins the blood of the sinner alone can make atonement; and hadst *thou* not done it, man, this arm of mine should have scourged the urchin clean of such foul cravings. Oh, woe! oh, woe! that child of mine should ever have set eyes upon such hateful works," she cried aloud, and then asked, "Dost thou not see the finger of God here, Hans, punishing us with, may be, a heretic son, for letting such devil's

wares within our gates! An I can lay hands upon the book I'll burn it, as the good priests of old did the writings of this same Bohemian goose before his very face, outside the gates of Constanz Cathedral," raved on the zealous dame.

"Such as thou, mother, do believe only in burning," urged the miner calmly.

"And such as thou, Hans," savagely retorted the wife, "have faith only in the devil's weapons—quibbling and hair-splitting"—and then suddenly remembering herself, she inquired eagerly, "Art thou sure the boy read the book?"

"Nay," was the answer, "I am sure he did *not*, for the writing is of so old a stamp that it cost me myself much pains to unriddle the text at first. See here," said the miner, "I brought away the book with me from the boy's room, and thou canst judge with thine own eyes," and as he said the words, Hans Luther proceeded to unclasp the covers, and then to walk towards his wife with the pages spread out before him.

The simple woman shrank back in terror, and held her palms up lest she should be contaminated with the touch of the proscribed volume, and cried, "Pack thyself off; I would not set eyes upon a line of it,—no! not as I value

the blessing of my sight. Forth with it! Had I known thou hadst had such a pack of lies under our roof I should not have slept easy in my bed for many a night past."

And had it not been for a promise of Hans that the book should be returned first thing on the morrow, the superstitious dame would have wailed many an hour long, before being quieted.

"Now, Gretha," the miner went on again, "I do want to know from thee how thou wouldst counsel me to behave myself towards thy boy in the morning?"

"Right, Hans! it is well to forethink the matter over," she made answer, "so that thou mayest not deal with him in thy heat again. Foremost, then," urged the dame, as she drew nearer to her husband, and spake in a half whisper, "the boy must acknowledge that he hath sinned against God and thee,"—

"Yea, and ask forgiveness of both," chimed in the feudal-minded old father.

"And then," Gretha went on, "he must be made to acknowledge his sorrow for his misdeeds; for tears cometh ever from the well-spring of a softened heart. Thou knowest, Hans, what a stubborn, stiffnecked child our Martin can be when the fit is on him. But I do tell

thee, father, thou owest it to him and me, to make the lad bitterly be-rue the grievous wrong of pilfering that God-slandering book ; and though I would not strive to fan the flames of thy wrath against the child, nevertheless, thou art but a poor friend to him, if thou dost not wring his heart with that sorrow which alone can make a new and righteous man of him."

The miner was in no way disposed to dispute the soundness of his wife's counsel. Indeed, the sentiments she uttered were so akin to those of his own heart that, had he himself not been anxious to hear her thoughts first on the subject, he would have prescribed a precisely similar course of treatment ; but after the scene that had occurred in the presence of their children, he wished to ascertain how far his wife would go with the lad, before venturing an opinion upon the subject. As it happened, however, they both arrived at the same point, by wholly different means : the miner's sense of honesty was outraged by the boy's secretly carrying off the book which he had pledged his trust none but himself should set eyes upon ; the mother, on the other hand, in her Catholic zeal, saw but little offence in the boy's borrowing a book from the chest in his father's absence, whilst the fact of his having looked into a volume that had been denounced by the Church as

“damnable heresy” made her shudder for the soul of her child. And thus the counsel ended by the couple being of one simple mind, viz., that Master Martin must be made to confess his sin, and ask pardon for his flagrant transgression on the morrow.

CHAPTER XL

THE STRUGGLE

THE night was passed by the Luther girls in watching their brother as he lay dozing on the settle. Not one of them would go to bed, for each was anxious to take the duty alone, and, girl-like, Ursula and Dortchen vowed they would sit up too, if Barbet remained there, all night; while little Lena begged so hard to be allowed to sleep with her head at Martin's feet that the others hadn't the heart to refuse her.

By the time Dortchen was stirring to open the gate to the "waschfrau," Martin was awake and sufficiently refreshed by his quiet slumber to feel but little more than the smart of the past blow—a result which Barbet attributed to the efficacy of the "weapon-salve" that her mother had luckily applied to the chain which had inflicted the wound; for, in those days of curing "by sympathy," as it was called, it was customary merely to bandage up the sore, and exhibit all the medicaments to the offending weapon itself.

As soon as Barbet had carried the smoking bowl of milk porridge up to her father's sleeping chamber in the morning, and the children had finished their early meal of bread and goat's cheese, the mother bade Martin go up to the old man and strive to make peace with him.

The boy, whose fright was now at an end, proceeded to carry out his mother's command without a word, and having mounted the ladder, stood once more face to face with the miner.

"Oh, thy mother hath sent thee hither, I warrant," began Hans Luther, as he looked up from a sample of "black copper" which Gottlieb had left for him, to show the quality of their last smelting, and which the miner was busily engaged in scrutinising, as he turned the dingy-looking particles over and over in his palm. "Come hither, lad," he went on, in a half-affectionate tone; "I wish to make thee feel the heavy sin thou hast been guilty of in mine absence."

The boy looked straight at his father, and said, frankly, "I *did* take the book, father, I own; but I did not soil it; and surely there be no sin in that."

"Thou didst *steal* it, boy—that is God's simple word for thy deed," spake out the miner, in a solemn tone.

"Steal it, father?" echoed Martin, as he started

back, indignant that so vile a reproach should be applied to him.

"Yea, well, *steal* it, I did say," thundered out the old man, stamping his foot upon the floor, as he grew angry at his son's doubting the construction he had put upon the act. "Thou didst take it when my back was turned, without either so much as saying 'With your leave or by your leave'—and what is that but theft, thick-head?"

"But, father," Martin expostulated, as he grew half-frightened again——

"Be still, babble-mouth! to take another's goods unbeknown to the owner hath no other name in every land and in every speech than downright robbery."

"I did have a mind to put it back, sir," interposed Martin, sharply; for he was not the boy to allow such an imputation to be put upon him without saying a word in his defence.

"That is the plea, thou ox," the old man shouted, "which is urged by every low pilferer who doth filch the gold that his master hath trusted him with.

"But thou hast often before trusted me with thy books, sir, and I did always give them back to thee without even a finger mark upon them," again advanced the lad, as he grew bolder in his resolve not to submit to such a scandal.

“ And because I did begin by *lending* my goods to thee, forsooth, thou must needs end by *taking* them—yea, and that without ever thinking it worth thy while to seek the allowance to do so,” retorted Hans Luther, whose anger was by no means lessened by the knowledge that he dare not explain to the boy the real reason of his vexation ; for he felt that if he told Martin the book was a proscribed one, and therefore perilous to have in the house, or that he had pledged his word to the rector of the Latin school that none should set eyes on it but himself, he would be making such a mystery of the matter, that the boy, perhaps, would go talking about it with his school-fellows, and thus the secret of the possession of such a volume by the Herr Rector would get bruited all over the neighbourhood. So, after a moment’s consideration, he put an end to the lad’s remonstrances by saying, “ Quibble as thou mayest, child, thou didst steal the book from my chest, and every magistrate would tell thee so.”

The spirited little fellow turned scarlet as he heard the ugly words, and said, bravely, “ I care not, sir, for any magistrate in such a case ; for I do say it to thee, in all worshipfulness,” and he bowed his head as he uttered the speech, “ I did *not* thieve the book from thee.”

“ Thou didst, sirrah !” thundered out the old miner, as

he strove to enforce the only point upon which he dare raise an objection. "And now, Martin, I want to know from thee what atonement thou hast to offer for such a sin."

The heroic youth drew himself up and said, as he stood as firm as marble in the presence of the father that he had lately feared even to flight, "None, sir."

"None, mule?" roared the violent old man between his clenched teeth, as he threw the handfull of ore, like a volley of shot, at the boy's head; and then he laughed savagely, as he said, "But we will see whether thou canst not be *made* to pay thy father what thou owest him."

The old man rose from the stool upon which he had been sitting and paced about the room, seeking hastily for any weapon that might be at hand. The house-spear, that was placed every night by his bed-side was the only one that presented itself; so, breaking the iron head from it, he advanced towards the boy with the thick spear-stock clutched in his fist; and then with his outstretched finger he pointed to the floor, as he held the heavy rod directly over the boy's head. "Now, sir," he said, in a stern voice, "down on thy knees at my feet this very minute, and ask my forgiveness for the theft."

The young martyr bowed his head again, and said respectfully to his parent, "I am sorry to refuse to do thy

bidding, father, but my heart telleth me of no theft, and I cannot, therefore, ask thy forgiveness for it."

"Down on thy knees, I say again," the father roared.

The boy stood steadfast as a statue.

"Down on thy knees, I tell thee, ox!" and with the words the miner struck him several heavy blows with the thick stick on the shoulder. "Wilt thou ask my forgiveness for the theft now?"

The boy merely bit his lip as he shrugged the shoulder that had been smitten, and then, bowing once more, he repeated, "My heart upbraideth me with no such sin against my father."

Then was heard a loud scream and a rush of feet to the bottom of the ladder below. "Oh, mother," cried the girls, "father is beating Martin again."

"Go you to him, mother, oh, do!" implored Lena.

"I can hear the blows fall," cried Ursula, "like to those of a flail at threshing-time."

"I'll run to them," said Barbet; and the girl's foot was already on the lower rung of the ladder, when the mother stood up and said imperatively to the maid, "Stay thee here, Barbet; thy father is but doing his duty to his son. Hark!" she added; and she pointed to the open trap-door above.

"Wilt thou ask my forgiveness for thy theft, unthankful one?" then they heard the miner demand once more; and as they listened anxiously for the answer, they caught the following words, uttered in the same respectful tone as before, "My heart upbraideth me with no theft, and therefore I cannot ask forgiveness for a sin I am guiltless of."

"Mule! mule!" they heard their father roar again and again; and then there was a sound of more blows, and heavier ones, too, than had yet reached the ear.

"Oh, mother, mother!" cried the younger girls, clustering about the dame, and stretching their clasped hands up towards her, as they begged her to intercede.

"Be still, I say," answered the frau Luther, sternly, as she brushed the little upraised palms from beside her; "an a jackass will not go the way he be wanted, he must be goaded to it, children."

Then there was a slight pause, and in the stillness between the sobbings of the girls the old man might be heard gasping for breath, before he endeavoured once more to subdue the indomitable spirit of the youngster.

But not a sound—not a sob—nor even a sigh was heard from the patient and determined boy himself.

"Down on thy knees, sir, I bid thee again," ran the command from overhead.

"Beat on, father," was the resigned reply, "and spare thy words; I can bear a deal more yet."

Then the little ones below put their fingers in their ears to shut out the sound of the terrible scene that followed. Barbet leant her head upon her mother's shoulder and buried her face in her hands, while the mother stood holding on by the ladder and looking up to the trap-door unmoved and wondering, with each fresh peal of blows, whether her stiff-necked boy would sue for pardon after *that*.

Some twenty odd minutes passed thus, after which the old miner himself descended the ladder, and as he sank down exhausted upon the settle, he flung the heavy staff from him and gasped out, while he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, "There, take the fruitless stick away; I have well nigh half-killed the boy with it, and yet he be as steadfast and stiff-necked as ever. I know not what to do with the dogged young imp."

"Shall I tell thee, father?" asked Barbet, as she ran to him and kissed him, and then whispered in his ear—"Forgive him."

"Ay, and let the urchin see that he can master me!" was the sarcastic reply. "Go to, children! this is no place for such as ye at such a tide as this. I would speak alone with your mother."

The girls quitted the apartment in obedience to their parent's command, but not without first giving a fond look up to the room in which they knew their poor brother Martin lay aching with the heavy blows that had just been dealt out to him.

Then the father and mother sat for awhile in silence, staring vacantly at each other. At length the wife inquired, sorrowfully, "What wilt thou do now with the iron-hearted boy, Hans? Thou must not let him get the best of thee in this strife. Having begun the battle, thou must fight it out, or else thou hast no craft to tame thy children ever after."

The miner struck the air with his fists as he swore, "By the God above me I'll break the colt into the harness ere I throw down the reins," and then added, "A father must rule in his household lest he would have peace-breakers for children."

"That is righteous, Hans," the wife made answer; "but how wilt thou gain thine end with such sturdy stuff as our Martin be made of? Thou canst not touch his heart thou seest by bruising his skin."

The miner laughed savagely in reply, and said immediately, "An we cannot get at it by pounding his hide,

mother, why we must needs see whether we cannot stir the soul of him by pinching his belly. Not a crumb of mine shall he touch till I make his knees crook as readily as a camel's at my bidding. A few days' starving will ever humble the proudest of us."

"But first," interposed the mother, "let *me* go, Hans, and see whether I can move the little rock. We beat the metal into shape only when we cannot melt it, and mayhap the boy's spirit may be as supple as potter's clay in a mother's hand, whilst thy rougher usage would only break the vessel. I'll go to him," and as the mother mounted the ladder to carry out her words, the miner looked up after her and said, "God speed thee on thine errand woman!"

The kindly mission, however, was of no avail; for, although the mother fondly implored her boy to ask forgiveness at his father's hands—though she kissed him and pitied his sufferings—though she wept over him as she entreated him to put an end to the unseemly strife in the household—though she told him that he was about to leave them soon, and begged of him not to part with his father in anger against him—still all her pleadings, all her conjurations were mere words scattered to the wind, for the boy would merely persist in saying, "that he was no

thief, and therefore could not ask his father's forgiveness on that account."

Accordingly on the mother's return the lad was packed off to his bed-chamber, as soon as Gretha had communicated the result of her errand to her husband; and then the girls were all summoned to the kitchen and forbidden on pain of their father's heavy displeasure to carry any food to their obdurate brother Martin, until he had consented to make the acknowledgment his father had commanded him to do.

"But Martin will die, father, of hunger without a bit of bread to eat," sobbed out the heart-broken little Lena.

"It was my fault, sir," urged Barbet, "for giving up thy keys to him."

"Be dumb, children! thy words are wind," exclaimed the stern old miner; "it is thy brother who punisheth himself now, for I have thrown down the whip. He hath but to ask my forgiveness to share my board again; and if it be harder to him to utter those simple words than it be to bear the pangs of hunger, and his stubborn soul would rather crave for food than grace at my hand, why let him feel the sharp sting of want."

The Luther house all that day was as if there had been a corpse in it. Sighs were heard instead of words, and as

the girls sat mute at their work, their eyes were many a time filled with tears to think that their brother was alone and in pain, and they forbidden to offer him the least creature-comfort. And when at night they went to their father, and knelt down before him to have his blessing on their head, they one by one buried their face in the old man's lap and begged him have pity on the poor boy. "Let us take him but one slice of bread," they each entreated in turn. "Martin hath not tasted food all this livelong day, sir, and must be sore faint at heart after the bitter beating he hath had."

But mother and father were alike deaf to the supplications of the pretty gentle-hearted intermediators. The only answer the children got was that their father had a hard, stern duty to perform—that he would cheerfully let Martin have the food immediately the boy was disposed to purchase it at the before-named small cost to his pride; and the miner added that he should go to the youngster himself before he retired to rest on purpose to make the inquiry.

The girls waited up to hear their brother's answer. Not even little Lena would go to bed though she could hardly keep her eyes open, and though her mother promised her that she would wake her up and tell her if peace had been made.

And when the children saw the old man take up the fat-lamp and proceed towards Martin's chamber they each suffered an agony of suspense in the interval of his absence; until, at length, little Lena, who was wide awake now, and had been watching out in the gallery for the old man's return, ran in clapping her hands, as she cried in a half whisper, "Father be coming back."

Then they all clustered about the old miner, eager to hear what had taken place; but Hans shook his head as he said, "That boy hath a spirit as proud as the Prince of Darkness. I did ask thy brother, girls," he proceeded to recount, "whether he wanted for anything."

"And what was his answer, father?" anxiously inquired the sisters.

" 'I thank you, sir, nothing,' was all he did say," went on the miner. " 'Not even my blessing?' quoth I."

"Go on, father," interposed Barbet.

" 'Yea, I did forget to ask for that, an thou wilt give it me, sir,' quoth the boy in return," continued the old man. " 'Art thou willing to earn it, Martin?' I did ask. 'What wouldst thou have me do to get it, sir?' said your brother. 'Merely ask forgiveness for thy theft, and thou canst have it freely, Martin,' was the speech I made to him. And what think you, girls, was the speech he did give me back for mine?"

“What?” they one and all exclaimed eagerly.

“ ‘Why then, I fear me, sir,’ said the sullen boy, ‘I must needs try and rest without it. God help me!’ then thy brother cried, to which I did add ‘Amen,’ and thereupon did leave him. Yea, indeed, children thy brother be as untameable as a crop-throat,” the old man sighed as he finished the story.

The girls all hung their heads in bitter sorrow. They knew how vain it would be to say a word to their father in such a mood, so they merely wished that he might sleep well, and withdrew quietly to their bed-chambers.

CHAPTER XII.

THE STARVED BOY.

POOR little Martin passed through sad and bitter sufferings in the tedious hours of that dreadfully long, lonesome day. His body ached with the bruises on his flesh so that he could hardly rest or turn in his bed without a shudder; while, after the sickness of his pain had subsided, his stomach began to crave and yearn for food, as though it were filled with burning coals. He gnawed at the hide, however, that covered him, as he still resolved not to succumb to his bodily anguish; and then he tried to divert his mind from the sharp goading of the want he felt by praying to St. Aloysius, the patron-saint of the young. Thus some few hours were passed till at length the inward biting of the want of food was succeeded by thirst; then his throat seemed like a red-hot tube in his body, while his mouth was parched and dry as the sands of the desert; and he cried aloud in his agony! "Oh, blessed mother of God, give me strength to bear this bitter trial."

He could no longer rest in his bed ; so he crawled to the dormer-window of the garret in which he slept, in the hope that it might be raining, and he could catch a few drops in his hand. But the sun was blazing in the sky, and the very look of the fiery light turned him sick again. Then he wished that he could cry, that he might drink his tears ; but his heart was withered, he said ; so he fell upon his knees again and prayed to St. Anna that she would have pity on him, and make the rain fall, that he might only moisten his mouth and lips with it. Presently he was up again and pacing the room as he fretted under the burning thirst like a hyena in his cage, while he clasped his throbbing temples and cast his eyes to Heaven in supplication of a drop of water to drink.

This phase, however, before long, passed into a raging fever, and then in the wildness of the delirium that came upon him he saw his chamber peopled once more with a legion of ugly imps. First came a band of "nixes" (water demons) that had skins like porpoises, wet from Pilate's Pond, and holding shells-full of liquid crystal close under his lips ; and as the boy strove to snap at the precious draught, he saw it burst into a cloud of steam as suddenly as if the fluid had been dropped upon burning coals.

Now his head began to swim and he staggered back to his bed, as if he were positively drunk with the want of drink; and then as the chamber span round, and the bed beneath him seemed to rock like a cock-boat in a tempest, he could hear wild weird voices singing to him the loveliest seraph music; and the next instant giant rocks seemed to rise up before him with a broad clear river, green as grapes, sweeping round their base; and then far down in the silver sheen of the stream he could see the sylph-like form of the sprite of the Lurlei gradually floating to the surface of the flood in her misty water chariot, and hear her play her Eolian dulcimer with fingers that seemed to drip melody, while she sang to him a spell that drew him nearer and nearer to her, as though he were a straw upon the water and the throat of the siren the whirlpool itself.

At length, however, the fever had worn off, and then, as the night came on, the boy was only faint and sick with the babe-like weakness that seemed to paralyze his every limb; and there he lay half entranced with his violet eyes upturned to Heaven, without uttering a murmur—ay, and without shedding a tear. Still, it was impossible to sleep, for, though his brain was comparatively quiet, the war that was still going on in his body would not allow him to doze, even for a minute.

He lay like one in a state of catalepsy, as bodily helpless as if a stupor was upon him, and yet conscious of all that was passing round him, when the scene occurred with his father which has already been described ; and when the old man left him for the night, the boy merely turned his violet eyes to Heaven again, and was quiet and uncomplaining as before.

“Who cometh to me again ?” said Martin, softly, as he heard the trap-door, in the darkness, open once more.

“It be only I, brother ! thy dear sister Lena,” whispered a child’s voice in the dark, and as she said the words, the little thing groped her way towards her brother’s bed, and threw herself upon him, kissing him till she burst into a flood of tears that nearly choked all utterance. “I did forget thy bruised limbs, dear Martin !” she exclaimed, after awhile. “I fear me I did hurt thee, for I did feel thee shrink as I flung myself upon thee.”

The brother merely kissed her cheek fondly as she pressed it to his, and said faintly, “Thank thee, Lenachen, for this ! Thou art ever a dear, *good* girl to me.”

“Father would call me a very naughty one to-night,” replied the little thing, “if he but knew what I had done against his bidding.”

“It be wrong, Lena, to do anything against his bidding,”

urged Martin, in a voice so weak that Lena had to put her ear close to distinguish what he said.

"Yea, I do know; but I could not help it, brother," cried the sister, patting him softly on the cheek, as she sat by his side on the edge of the bedstead. "I did know thou hadst not tasted food all this long day, and I could not rest in my bed until I had brought thee this bit of bread. I did slip it in my pocket at supper for thee, when father's head was turned," chatted on the child, as she kept smoothing her brother's cheek with her hand. "I did wait till Dortchen was fast asleep, and then did steal away out of my bed to bring it thee. Why, thou art crying, Martin!" ejaculated the girl, as she drew her hand suddenly away; "I did feel a tear-drop fall quite hot upon my wrist. I would not make thee weep, brother. Thou art sad with thinking that I shall get into trouble for thy sake, I know; and that mother will beat me, perhaps, because we were all forbidden to take so much as a crumb to thee; but I couldn't help it, Martin, indeed I couldn't," and with the words the broken-hearted little maid leaned her cheek again gently against her brother's, and for a minute or two the boy and the girl wept in concert.

"Thou art the only one in the house, little sister," whispered Martin, "that can moisten my eyes. I did

think my heart was dried up by this time, but thou couldst find the well-spring, deep as it lay. Bless thee, sister! thy goodness hath melted my spirit, while father could only gall it with his spear-stock. Bless thee for thy sweet charity."

"But come, Martin, thou dost not eat thy bread," urged Lena fondly, "and I be sure thou must want it sadly. I did take the biggest piece that was on the platter for thee, and I shall not leave thee till I have heard thee swallow every piece of it. Come, eat, there's a dear," she repeated, as she forced the morsel into her brother's hand.

"I would not touch it, Lena," said the resolute boy, raising his voice as high as he could, "for all the wealth in Christendom; moreover, I have got beyond the want of it now. Hadst thou come earlier, little girl, I might have thought the evil one had sent thee to tempt me; but now I know thou art like thy namesake, Magdalena, who did weep at the feet of the Suffering One."

"But *do* eat it, brother," the child implored again, breaking off a piece and holding it to his mouth; and then, as the boy brushed her hand away, she flung herself upon the floor, and buried her face in the rushes, while she sobbed out in the bitterness of her grief, "Oh,

thou wilt die, if thou goest on so, Martin ! father will never give in to thee. Oh, thou wilt die—die !—dear brother, and then my heart will break.”

“Listen, Lena, listen !” said the boy, who was too faint to talk much ; “dost thou call to mind that father did say I should not touch a crumb till I did ask his forgiveness ? and as the girl nodded, Martin added, “Well, then, let me tell thee, girl, I am not the boy to break his *last* command to me,” and weak as he was, the words were uttered so gravely that there was all the ring of the most solemn determination in them.

Presently he said hurriedly, as the girl still lay weeping convulsively beside him, “Lena ! Lena ! there is some one coming ; go, do not let father find thee here, I beg of thee ;” and the next minute the terrified child was hiding behind the same sheaves as on the previous night.

The new comer was none other than sister Ursula ; and she, too, was there upon the same loving errand, laden, also, with the same proof of affection for the starving boy. And as she whispered to her brother to tell him she had brought him some food, she added that there was a slice from Barbet and Dortchen, as well, besides a bowl of milk for him. Her sisters, she said, had seen that she meant, come what might of it, to take her brother something to

eat that night; and when they found she was determined to do so, they could not allow her to go without some token of their love as well. Whatever he did, however, he was not to let sister Lena hear of it, for she was too young to be trusted with such a secret.

"Come, do not sob, Martin," cried Ursula, as she knelt down beside her brother to soothe him: "be sure we will make peace with thee and father in the morning; and had it not been that it was our brothers' night on, for working at the smelting ovens, Gottlieb, I know, would have got father to forgive thee ere this." Then, after listening awhile, she added, "But it is not thou who art sobbing, Martin; there is some one else weeping in the room, as I live," and as she said the words little Lena rushed from her hiding-place towards her sister, crying, "Thou wilt not tell father of me, wilt thou, Ursula? and I be sure I will not tell of thee."

The elder sister pressed the little one to her bosom as she replied, "Thou should'st have spoken to us, Lena, before breaking thy father's command, and then we might have saved thee from getting into disgrace with him. There, there, don't sob so, child," she went on; "thou'lt have mother hearing thee. Dortchen did tell me thou wast asleep in thy bed, thou sly little puss! I

would stay longer with thee, Martin," then she said hurriedly, "but I fear this little runaway will be missed, and then the whole house will be astir after her. There, I have put the bread and the milk on the little table in the corner, ready to thy hands."

"Thou hadst better add this slice to the others, sister," said Martin, gently, as he handed to her the piece of bread Lena had brought to him: "an angel from heaven did bring it me."

"Indeed!" answered the girl, as she shook her forefinger at her little sister, "even an angel that be as stealthsome as a little mouse—yea, and one that is as fond of hiding among the straw, too. But good night, Martin! sleep well. We will all be at peace in the morning!" and then dragging little Lena from the chamber, she crept softly back to her room.

Early on the morrow Hans Luther was awake and about; for he, too, could not rest in his bed with a sense that his boy was starving. So while the girls were busy packing their baskets (long before the breakfast hour) with the wet linen that they were to carry to the Castle-hill to dry and bleach as soon as the sun was up, the old miner, to their surprise, passed through the kitchen, merely say-

ing "Good morning to ye, children," in answer to their respective greetings. And then, as Dortchen looked out of the door after him, she saw that his steps were bent in the direction of Martin's room.

On entering the chamber of his son, the father said in a softened tone, "Come, boy! put an end to this strife, and say thou art sorry for the theft. Thou knowest *I* cannot with honour bend to thee; so do thou stretch out thy hand towards me, and be sure mine will not be slow in grasping it."

The languid lad lifted his arm as well as he could from under the leathern coverlet, and let it drop outside his bed. "I have not strength to hold my hand out to thee, father, or I would," murmured the exhausted boy.

"There's a good lad," said the old man, as he stooped down and clutched it; "and now say in mine ear thou art sorry for the theft thou wast guilty of, and we are one again."

The miner stretched his head forward to catch the answer; but all he heard was, "My heart chideth me with no such guilt done to thee, father; and therefore I cannot say I am sorry for it."

The next instant the old man flung the limp arm from him as he started up again, and cried, "Shame on thee,

boy, to let me beg at thy bedside for peace between us, and to let me do so *fruitlessly*," and then turning angrily round, he said, "The sin be on thine own head, Martin ! It is the last time I come to thee." And he was about to leave the room, when he nearly stumbled over the little table behind him.

"Soh !" he cried, as he stood astounded for a moment, and looked at the four thick slices of bread and the bowl of milk that lay still untouched on the board before him ; and then saying, " A slice from every one of them ! Has it come to this, eh ? " he hastened from the room.

In another minute he was in the kitchen again with the girls clustered about him, eager to hear the result of his interview with their brother. "Thou hast made peace with Martin, eh, father ?" asked Barbet anxiously.

The old man returned no answer to the question, but merely glanced from each of the girls to the other ; and then said, sharply, " Tell me, now, children, which of ye, n outrage of my bidding, did take food and drink to thy brother's chamber ? "

The sisters all coloured crimson with shame, and exchanged looks with one another, as they hung down their heads abashed, while Barbet spake out for the rest : " Each of us be as guilty as the other, father. None of

us could bear to think that our brother was starving in his chamber while we had plenty to eat at thy board; so we *all* did give him a share of our supper yesternight."

"Ye did, did ye—*all* of ye?" asked the old man, with a toss of the head. "And thou darest to tell me this to my face, girl?" shouted the father.

"We would not willingly have wounded thee, sir," said Barbet, sorrowfully, "but indeed and indeed the bondage thou didst set upon us was too strong."

"It was, my child!" cried the old miner, as he threw himself upon the girl's neck, "and I do love thee all the better for the sundering of it. I was a fool to think that ye could have done otherwise;" and when the old man sat down, and bent his head in humility, the girls grouped round him and kissed him one after the other, as they cried, "You are not angry with us, eh, father?"

"Angry!" echoed the miner; "ye have gladdened me beyond measure. Ye have taught me a lesson that mayhap I should never have learnt till thy brother had fallen a victim to the bitter temper that has overpowered me. There, go ye to your brother, children—feed him and tend him to your heart's fill; and, moreover, tell him that he hath my forgiveness, even though he be too proud to think it worth the asking for.

And when the girls had scampered off in a body to carry the glad tidings to Martin, Gretha rose and threw her arms about her husband's neck and kissed him, while she said, "Bless thee, my man! I too did note yesternight what the girls did have a mind to do; and I, like thee, did want the heart to chide them, because their love for their brother at such a tide was stronger than their fear of their father's wrath."

CHAPTER XIII.

MARTIN LEAVES HOME FOR THE FIRST TIME.

HANS LUTHER had too much common sense to be a mere disciplinarian. Though he lived at a time when fathers expected as much deference and servility from their children as the barons of old did from their villeins, he had still heart enough, when his temper did not interfere with its promptings, to make allowance for the occasional waywardness of his offspring; and now that he saw Martin had a spirit that would not brook control, he was more convinced than ever that it was advisable they should live asunder for a time.

The most difficult period in all government is, when those who have been kept in bondage acquire sufficient strength of mind to have some little "will of their own;" for then the governors, on the one hand, are satisfied that more stringent measures are necessary to restrain the growing desire for liberty; while the governed, on the other, get day by day to feel the shackles more galling to

them. It is as easy to rule over those who have no individual will to stir them, as it is to train a lamb that is brought up by hand. But pig-driving every one allows to be the most trying of occupations.

Now Martin had just got to have such "a will of his own"—that is to say, the principle of self-assertion—of thinking and acting for himself—which in most youths is not developed until after their fifteenth year, and which according as it *is* developed in a greater or less degree, serves to make either great or little men of them—to translate them into somebodies or nobodies, as the case may be—and this distinctive attribute of man's nature, we say, was almost mature in Martin Luther even in his fourteenth year. Now was the time, therefore, that it depended principally upon the father, as to whether a boy, with such a power of self-will in him, should turn out a hero or an "incorrigible."

Luckily for Martin, as well as for after generations, the old miner parent, stern as he was, had too acute an understanding to be blind to the high heroic qualities of his son. He had had a hard fight to prolong his mastery over the boy, but now he was convinced that Martin was too strong and too determined a lad for him to conquer and rule over any longer. Hans knew, moreover, the

despot he himself became whenever anybody opposed him; so he was not long in coming to the conclusion that it would be better for the peace of both of them, that they should part for a while.

Accordingly it was arranged by Hans and Gretha that their unruly son should be packed off as soon as possible to the currant-school at Magdeburg, with little Reinecke, the smelting-master's boy, who lived in the smelting-street hard by—a piece of news which gladdened the heart of Martin to no slight extent, for as yet his travels in the world had never stretched beyond Eisleben or Hettstadt. Magdeburg, too, he had heard was a town larger than those two big places put together; besides, Hans Reinecke had told him it was situate on the banks of the Elbe, which he had learnt at school was one of the largest rivers in Germany, and as yet he had seen no stream bigger than the Wipper—the narrow little strip of water that traversed the meadows at the back of their town by the Raben-gate.

Still, pleased as Martin was at the thoughts of seeing what the world was like far away from home, he was, on the other hand, of too fond a nature to quit the old familiar haunts of his boyhood without a struggle or a sigh. So as he lay in his bed, a few mornings before

leaving home, he would think of the pleasant little family parties to breakfast on the summit of the "*Rabens-Kuppe*," or the "*Häring's-berg*," at Whitsuntide—of the sport he and his brothers had when the pond by his father's smelting-ovens at Mullendorf was dragged, and the dainty carp-feasts there always used to be in the evening afterwards—of the violets and snow-bells he gathered every spring-time on the Castle-hill with his sisters—of his little sledging-parties with his school-fellows on their sliding-stools down the *Thalwand Hill* in the winter-time—and of the peasants' dances under the linden-trees in the villages round about at harvest-tide. Next he would recall their trips to the woods by the *Fuchsberg* to cut the branches of birch, so as to make the house all green with the boughs and leaves on Green Thursday; and then he would wonder who, when he was away, would fetch the water at midnight on Easter-eve from the *Valley-brook* for his sisters to wash their faces in, and who would bring it home without saying a word by the way, so that the charm it had of beautifying all who bathed in it might not be broken—and which of his brothers and sisters would find the bird's nest with the sugar-eggs in it that his father always hid about the house for them at the same season—and which

of his schoolfellows, too, would dress up as the mummers at Christmas-tide next year? Would Johannes Ruhel act the old dame then as before, and be cudgelled, as usual, for picking the apples off the floor that the other boys threw down? Would the choir-boys sing as finely at the cathedral in Magdeburg as they did in their St. George's Church, and whom would he hear preach there in the place of the Pastor Ledener who always came to eat lentils and herrings with his father on New Year's Eve, and who had sent him round to all his friends before confirming him to say to each? "If ever I have done any wrong to thee I do repent me, and beseech thy forgiveness." Ah! that was a hard thing for him to do to many, the boy would say to himself; though he liked very well, he would add the minute after, to go to Caspar Muller, the Graf Albrecht's chancellor, for he gave him a golden ducat at the time of his visit, besides a horn of mead to drink.

What would little Lena do without him? he wondered. Who would melt the lead and pour it into the pail for her on Sylvester night, and who would buy her the dough rabbits with juniper berries for eyes at the baker's then? Who would help Barbet churn, too, and who would sweep the chaff from the corn on the barn-floor with the goose's wing, for Dortchen, when he had left them all?

And thus, as the time drew nearer and nearer for his departure, Martin would lie awake half the night, thinking of old friends and old places, for the fond, timid-hearted boy dreaded to quit them and yet longed to go.

The bundle was not very big that Martin had to carry at his back on the journey ; seeing that it contained only a new pair of leather breeches that had been made expressly for the occasion by the "*beutler*" of the town ; a shirt as coarse as sackings, and a flat squab-like loaf of black bread ; for in those days combs and brushes, handkerchiefs and stockings, were hardly even articles of luxury. Barbet, however, had made him a lard cake, and this, with a large piece of liver sausage, and a few sols to pay his expenses by the way, were thrust into the leathern "*nanzen*" (travelling-pouch) that hung at his side.

On the day fixed for his departure the boy had sat all the morning with his sister Lena's hand locked in his, the loving little couple staring vacantly at each other, and dumb with grief, as though they were waiting for the executioner to come and part them for ever.

And when the hour of quitting arrived, and Hans Reinecke was there ready to set out with Martin, the little girl flung her arms about dear brother's neck, and clung

so tightly to him, as she wept aloud, that the mother had to tear the child from him by force.

When Martin had kissed them all round, and knelt at his mother's feet for her blessing, he approached his father, and, bowing to the old man, craved a blessing likewise at *his* hands; whereupon they broke bread together, after which the miner rose from his seat and laid his two palms on the crown of the bending lad. Then they shook hands and each saluted the other on either cheek.

"This done, the father said, "Now, Martin, we are at peace with each other;" and then to test the quality of the boy he added, "and now wilt thou, before leaving, ask forgiveness for thy theft?"

But still the stubborn boy made answer, "I know of no theft that I ever wrought against thee, father, and cannot therefore need forgiveness for such a deed," and then turning abruptly on his heel he cried, "Fare ye all well, and may God bless ye."

The next minute he and young Hans Reinecke were passing through the "water-gate;" and looking back upon their beloved old town, then glancing up at the Castle, with its Golden Chamber, its Chapel, and its casemates and bastions, they wondered when they should set eyes upon them all again.

And when the lads were fairly out of the town, they took off their wooden shoes, and slinging them over their shoulders proceeded on their way barefoot, while their leathern girdles to their short smocks were unbuckled and stowed away, together with the clasp-knife that dangled from them, in the crown of their goat-skin caps.

For a time they trudged on, talking only of the distance they had to go, saying it was eight good hours to Stassfurth, where they were to sleep that night. Nor was it till they reached the little village of Leimbach that their sadness at leaving home began to wear off and their tongues got to move almost as freely as their feet.

"I do wonder me," said Hans Reinecke, as his large raisin-coloured eyes began to twinkle again (for the boy had the same swarthy Italian look as distinguishes many of the German peasantry located on the banks of the Rhine) "what kind of a place be this great city of Magdeburg, Martin. It may be finer, but it can't be prettier, than our town of Mansfeld, can it?"

To which Martin replied, "Nay, for thou knowest we have a speech-word among us, 'that whomsoever God loveth, to them doth he give a living in the Countship of Mansfeld;' nor can it be as rich as our town of Eisleben, either, for I have heard father say that, what with the

mining and the brewing there, the Eisleben folk are as well-to-do as any in Germany."

"Yea, well!" returned little Hans, "my father did have it from Count Albrecht's chancellor that—oh, dear me! I can't tell how many *thousand hundred-weight* of copper" (and the boy duly emphasized the words) "were not got out of the mines round about us last year."

"And my father," went on Martin, as they each boasted boy-like against the other, "did say that he heard at the Rathskeller, in Eisleben, that as much beer was brewed there as would fill a smelting-house pond every year."*

"That is true, Martin," went on Hans, delighted to sing the praises of his native place now that they were quitting it; "for when I did go with mother over to the Eisleben weekly market, I did find that no strangers were allowed to sell their wares there until after the townsfolk had got rid of their goods; besides, you know there was a great sign painted up against the '*Rath-haus*,' saying, that none but citizens were allowed to buy in the shops between sunrise and sun-set? Yea, indeed, the Eisleben folk have many favours."

* The chronicles say, that at the beginning of the 16th century, 2,000 and odd barrels of Eisleben beer were sold in the course of the twelvemonth. See *Krumhaar's History of The Grafschaft of Mansfeld*.

And thus the boys went on reminding one another of the several excellences of their native country and cities, till the miner's town of Hettstädt was reached, when they were too much taken up with the sights of the streets and the quaint old square tower standing in the middle of the principal thoroughfare, with the little arched gateway beneath—like the entrance to a gigantic hen-roost—to do other than gape at the people and the houses as they sauntered on.

Once out in the open country again, the boys began as before—"That town, too, belongs to our two counts, as well as Eisleben and Mansfeld, doesn't it? Musn't they be rich, Martin?" went on little Hans.

"I did hear the pastor Ledener, when he did eat his salad and hard boiled eggs at our board at supper, last Shrove-tide," Martin returned, "tell mother that many of the burghers round about Mansfeld were richer than the Grafs themselves, saying that once one of the poor Mansfeld Counts was speaking of the wealth of his people to the Duke of Brunswick, when he swore that he had but to utter the bidding, for one to bring a hundred steeds to his gate, and another to show him a cavern filled with silver dollars; and sure enough, on the Brunswicker doubting the tale, Johann Zoerner, the master shaft-sinker, did lead the hundred horses into the palace-yard; and Christoph Stahl,

the smelting-master, did take the Duke to his cellars and show him a slate-cave full to the roof with silver pieces.”*

“But that be nought,” said Hans, “to the tale I did hear Johannes Ruhel, the scribe, tell on the night of my grandfather’s golden wedding.”†

“And what might that be, little braggart?” asked Martin, as he seized his companion playfully by the shoulder.

“Why, he did say,” continued the boy, “that Graf Buffo the Sixth, of Mansfeld, did once in his travels, at the beginning of the present year-hundred, visit the island city of Venice, and there the—the—the—” he stammered, “what did he call him? yea, the Doge, senators, and citizens did offer unto him, in honour of their great copper dealings with the people of our land, a stallion with golden hoof-irons to his feet and a golden saddle on his back.”‡

“Make me no idle tales!” was Martin’s contemptuous reply; “dost take me for a dull-witted youngster? Johannes Ruhel must have been tying his calf up when

* *Francke’s Historie der Grafschaft Mansfeld.*

† A “golden wedding” in Germany is the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the marriage-day; even as the “silver wedding” is that of the 25th, and the “diamond wedding” that of the 75th; the latter being a feast that, it is needless to add, seldom occurs.

‡ This curious story is told by Spangenberg in his *Sachssiche Chronik*, p. 523.

he did say the like.* And so saying, the boy began rubbing the tip of one forefinger along side the other, as he extended it close under his companion's nose.

This little bit of sarcastic pantomime was descriptive of the act of scraping a carrot, a motion which is generally performed by the youngsters of Saxony when they fancy they get the better of any person. So young Master Martin laughed, as he exclaimed while doing so, "*Schab-e schab-e rübchen*, my beloved Hans."

"It *be* true, I tell ye," murmured Hans, as he turned away in dudgeon; "dost think the Herr Johannes Ruhel be a liar?"

"Liar or no liar," Martin retorted, "I do know that the golden ducat Herr Caspar Müller did give me was no bigger round than a daisy, and how many of such pieces of gold, think you, sheep-head, must it have taken to make the shoes and saddle for a horse. Why, the Pope himself be not rich enough for that."

"I tell thee it *be* true," replied Hans; and then the boys, as they grew tired with their journey, began first to wrangle, and then to quarrel by the way.

For a time they walked on apart; but on reaching

* This is the old German idiom for getting tipsy; perhaps it is the equivalent to the vulgar English phrase of *getting tight*.

Sandersleben, the common want of something to eat soon made them friends again, as they sat down outside the city walls, and began devouring their bread and sausage by the brook-side ; for the little amenities of one boy sharing his lard cake with the other, and receiving a purple-coloured Easter-egg, boiled as hard as the shingles on the sea-shore, in return from his friend, soon set matters all right again.

Then on they walked with renewed vigour, chatting as usual by the way.

"To which of our two Counts, Albrecht and Ernst, doth Sandersleben belong?" asked Hans Reinecke, as they passed through the town-gate leading to the Magdeburg road.*

"I know not," said Martin ; "but this I can tell thee, if it ever falleth into the hands of Count Ernst's sons, the Princes Gebhard and Albrecht, the folk will sorely rue the day ; for the priests have never a good word to say about them ; and I did hear it from the Pastor Ledener's mouth, that the youngsters do love to scoff at the holy fathers."

To this Hans replied, "My father doth say, Martin, that

* Sandersleben belongs really to Dessau, of which it is one of the frontier towns.

the sons of Count Albrecht, on the other hand, as show-holies, and that neither Prince Gunther, young nor Prince Hoier either, have brains enough to fill a egg, as he doth have it. 'They be all led by the l girdles of the monks,' be his words."

"An that be the hardest stone thy father hath at their heads," returned Martin indignantly, "it v bruise their pates sorely, Hans. For thinkest youth can do better than tread in the footsteps o good men, who are for ever begging bread for th while they do fast themselves. I should like my to hear thee, cousin, scoff at the holy folk, and I v thine ears would tingle for a good quarter-of-an-hou Shame on thine elders for putting such thoughts i Hans," went on the boy in all the fervour of his little dreaming of the change that one day was t over him. "For *my* part, Hans, I would rather cr knee to one of those bare-footed and bare-headed than I would to the Emperor Maximilian himself, w gold crown upon his head; and I do hope, Hans, never come to think otherwise."

Thus the day was passed with the lads, talking l upon matters with which they had but little exp and making resolves that in a few years they would

laugh at,—now boasting each against the other, and next taunting one another ; then quarrelling, and next making it up again, till at length the couple of sore-footed little wanderers dragged their weary limbs into the town of Stassfurth, where, after begging a night's lodging at many a burgher's house, they were ultimately treated to a bundle of straw in one of the barns, for the night.

Long before the sun rose, on the morrow, the little travellers were a-foot again, with limbs aching as if with rheumatism, from the long journey of the previous day,—the joints of their knees as stiff as the hinges of some old cellar-door, and their muscles as unelastic as leather. They had been too tired, and their feet smarting too acutely with the blisters on them, to allow them to sleep well on the previous night, so that at the beginning of the second day's journey, they each felt as if they had no strength to proceed. Martin, however, managed to cheer up his fainter-hearted little companion, and at last they were lucky enough to get a lift in an ox-wagon that overtook them on its way, with a load of bark, to the village of Atzenborn : for the driver took compassion on their youth, and proceeded to make all kinds of inquiries as to whither they were going, and whence they had come.

So when their story had been told, and the man had

learnt who their parents were and where they lived, he gave them, as he set them down at his journey's end, each a sup of apple-wine from his keg, and a piece of the wild honeycomb he had gathered in the woods, and then, bidding them be good boys and mind their prayers, he wished them "God speed" on their way.

They had still some hours to wander on after this, but the drink of cider had so cheered them, that away they trudged again as light-hearted, if not as light-footed, as the roebucks of the forest.

Nor was it late that night ere they reached the great city that was to be their home for some time to come; for as they passed down the long straggling street of the out-skirt village of Sudenburg, they beheld, at the end of the avenue of poplars that flanked the road, the huge mass of buildings composing the city, bristling with a hundred spires, and the tall towers of the cathedral, as ruddy with the beams of the setting sun as the red sandstone steeple of Freiburg itself; and as they saw the broad belt of the Elbe, as ruby as wine, and set with its huge island citadel, gliding past the long bank of the city wharves, their little hearts beat with wonder at the sight, for it was all as new to them as the world seen from the summit of a mountain is to some cockney citizen.

But soon other and sadder feelings came over them; for when they had crossed the draw-bridge and noted the monster green mounds and rampart walls with which the city was surrounded, and had passed through the long tunnel-like Sudenburger gate, the noise, the bustle, and the throng of that terribly large-looking city, where they knew they were utterly friendless, and so far away from home, drove them half-wild; and then the bitter sense of their desolateness burst upon the children's mind, for they felt well-nigh distracted, as, with their hands locked in one another, they trod the crowded thoroughfare of the "Broadway" in Magdeburg for the first time.

Whither were they to go?—which turning were they to take?—whom could they ask?"—Oh, God, what would become of them?

CHAPTER XIV.

YOUNG MARTIN AT MAGDEBURG.

At the end of the fifteenth century, the city of Magdeburg was one of the most opulent and busy in all Germany. What Köln was to the Rhine, Magdeburg was to the Elbe: the *entrepôt* of the merchandise of all the large towns lying near the banks of the great river. The "*Elbe-strom*" connected it directly with the great merchant city of Hamburg, and the neighbouring stream of the *Havel* brought it into water-communication with the equally-important commercial emporium of Frankfort-on-the-Oder; so that it was the main depository for all the goods imported into, and exported from, the central parts of Germany. Magdeburg was, moreover, the converging point of a number of main roads leading to the chief cities and towns of the empire, the highways meeting together there like the threads in the centre of a huge spider's web, with the wily merchants, lying in ambush, ready to pounce upon the many prizes that fell into their net.

Wherever was great wealth in the olden time, there priests and monks were sure to abound, as thick as mice in a granary; and wherever the priests and monks abounded, there also abounded a swarm of human vermin in the form of beggars, lepers, and thieves; the first to be fed at their "spitals," the second cured at their "lokes," and the last to be screened from the law in their sanctuaries. Now Magdeburg was not only the seat of an archbishopric, but the firmament above it was pierced with the spires of its multitude of churches. It had its *Dom-Kirche*—its *Johannis-Kirche*—and *Ulric's Kirche*—*Peter's Kirche*—and *Katharine's Kirche*—and a whole host of others, idle to catalogue. Besides these, too, there were the St. Anna's hospital—the Magdalena hospital—Georgienen hospital—and Heaven knows how many other 'spitals—in addition to the Augustiner Kloster, to which our little hero and his companion were jointly bound.

Further, the city was one of the great strongholds of the empire, and the town was fenced round by ramparts, and casemates, and bastions; besides being guarded by the great citadel itself, that reared its monster head, solid as a great rock, in the middle of the river.

The streets of such a town consequently presented a

curious commingling of merchant wealth and squalid beggary ; of all the appliances of peaceful industry, surrounded by all the attributes of war ; of bales of goods dangling from the cranes of almost every housetop, and heavy cannon ranged along the castellated wharves ; of barefooted monks and hooded nuns jostling soldiers and peasants, citizens and seamen, in the streets ; while the crowd of ships beside the quays, and in the docks outside the town, made the place seem to bristle with as many masts as spires.

The "*Augustiner Kloster*," to which Martin and Hans Reinecke were on their way, was a large block of buildings that stretched round three sides of a quadrangle, and which, pierced as the walls were, with windows as thickly as the port-holes to a ship's side, bore much the appearance of being some monster model lodging-house or reformatory of the olden time. Close adjoining it, on the northern side, stood the towerless and steepleless Walloner Church, and within a stone's throw of this, on the southern side, the church of St. Peter's reared its twin steeples high into the air ; whilst close under the front of the cloister stretched the old fishers' shore, with the river for ever streaming along before it ; and but a few paces off from this, stood the "*alte pack-hof*"—the ancient palatial-looking warehouse—with its wharves and cranes and sentry-boxlike toll-houses

ranged along the top of the castellated city walls, and a small fleet of merchant vessels, waiting to be laden or unladen, jostling one another in the stream below.

The interior of the cloister had the same bare prison or workhouse air about it as the exterior itself. It consisted merely of long lines of dingy and dusky passages, with door after door ranged on either side of them, and leading to cells that were as closely packed throughout the building as those in a honey-comb; and here, at the farther end of one of these same interminable passages, on the upper floor of the monastery, was situate a small cellar-like chamber—a mere bare-walled cave, as it were—with an unglazed casement, about as big as the scuttle to a ship's cabin, overlooking the river, the citadel, the quays, the water-mills, and the shipping; and this was to constitute the home of Martin and his little friend Hans for some time to come.

Now, the order of Augustine friars, among whom the boys had been sent to live and learn, formed one of the monkish brotherhood who believed beggary to be an essential element of the Christian religion. Altogether there were four classes of such mendicant monks, who (to distinguish them from the general body of zealots that had withdrawn from the common temporal concerns of the world, and formed

themselves into the several monastic communities) were denominated "*friars*," or brothers—from the French word *frère*. There were the Franciscans (or "Grey-friars"); and Dominicans (or "Black-friars"); the bare-footed Carmelites (or "White-friars"); and lastly, the Augustines, who, from their being accustomed to clothe themselves in black, like the Dominicans, seemed to have had no special secondary title.* Originally these friars were isolated hermits, but in the middle of the 13th century they were congregated into a body by the Pope, and since that time the several members of the order located in any one town lived together in separate cells (instead of caves) under one roof, which was denominated the cloister of the brotherhood.

The mendicant tribe of fanatics appears to have sprung up about the 1200th year after Christ, during the Pontificate of Innocent III., and to have rapidly increased, so that before long they spread over all Europe and formed many communities; the majority of whom lived on the alms they collected by begging from door to door—a prac-

* The "Capuchins" (or hooded-friars), and others such sects, were subsequent off-shoots from the classes above named; for, by a general council, under Pope Gregory X., the body of friars was restricted to four orders.

tice from which they derived their distinctive name of mendicants, or as they were called expressively in Germany, "*null-brüder*," that is to say, brothers possessing nothing at all in the world. Their rules were chastity even to celibacy; obedience to the "fathers" (or monks in orders); utter poverty; and a specially austere regimen of life.

Among such folk, therefore, a twelvemonth's board and lodging, even in the *uncomfortable* times in which our little hero lived, could not have been very acceptable to boys who had alike known the comparative luxury of a smelter's family. Their food at home might have been coarse, and the furniture rude and scanty; but, at least, the bread was ready to their hands, whenever they wanted it, and of eggs and salad there was no lack either, without so much as the trouble of seeking it.

But now a new and harder regimen was in store for the two lads. They were to start in life as beggars—beggars, without even the fanaticism to make beggary either earnest or agreeable work to them; and to wander through the streets of a town in which they were friendless, from house to house, singing for alms or food.

Indeed, the school to which they had been sent was one of those ancient and peculiar monastic institutions

which are termed in Germany (where they still exist) "*currend-schulen*," from the fact of the boys, who are educated there to sing in the choirs of the different churches in the city, having to carry round to the citizens' houses the "*currend*," or small tin money-box, on certain days of the week, in order to collect such trifling dole as the folk may please to give, in exchange for the hymns which the youths are allowed to chant at their doors before sun-rise.

Luckily for the new-comers, however, Andreas Proles was at that time the "*Provinzial*" of the Augustine friars located in the district of Magdeburg; and had it not been for his interposition, Hans and Martin might have fared even worse than they did, for Father Andreas was one of the earliest to raise a voice against the delinquencies of the monks, and the errors of the Church in those days. He had only lately been endeavouring to check the luxurious habits which had secretly grown up among the members of his own order—an order which, as we have said, was sworn to poverty and beggary as the main principle or mode of life. In his crusade against the "backsliders" of the brotherhood, he had ejected from many of the monks' cells the bedsteads and bedding with which the more worldly had supplied themselves, and had forced

them to return to their original hermit litter of rushes or straw ; so that when the Prior (who was a very different person from the honest Provincial himself) wanted to make the boys conform to all the austerity of life which friars were *supposed* to endure, the more considerate "Provincial" protested that it was unrighteous to force the little fellows to prescribe to such forms at an age when they could not possibly comprehend the virtue of them. Accordingly he directed that one of the bedsteads taken from the cells of the lapsarian brothers should be given over to the young scholars ; and thus their little cabin of a room came to be fitted with the luxury of a double bedstead and a couple of rugs.

This same specimen of monkish cabinet-work may be still seen standing in the identical cell in the identical Augustiner Kloster (now a poor-house) at Magdeburg. It may be briefly described as consisting of two "cribs," made of common wood, and placed one above the other, so as to form one piece of furniture. At the time we saw it, every inch of the sides and legs of the bedstead was carved over with names as thickly as an old school-desk ; and at first glance it reminded us strongly of a couple of berths arranged vertically, each over the other, taken out of a ship's cabin.

Here slept Martin and Hans, one in the upper berth, and the other in the lower ; and probably without even a chair or a table in the room besides. For whatever the beggar-brothers could get to eat was partaken of in the "refectory ;" the studies of the boys were carried on in the school, and their *toilets* made at the pump in the yard ; so as the cell was assigned only as a private apartment for sleeping and praying in, no stool nor board could be required for the idle recreations of lounging, or reading and writing.

An hour or two before vespers, it was the daily custom with the reverend mendicants who had been out on their rounds with their wallets at their back, to return to the cloister and spread out, on the long refectory table, the various proceeds of their days' begging. As they each came dropping in, one after another, they were received with jeers or applause by the rest of the brotherhood, according as they entered the hall, either with the empty bag dangling under their arm, or swollen with a heavy load upon their bending backs ; while, outside the gates, there thronged a wretched crowd of squalid cripples and idiots, thieves and outcasts, old and young, waiting to be fed by the friars with the crumbs collected from the citizens' tables.



The Augustine Friars.

"Well done, brother Fabian!" shouted the assembly, as a friar in a long black gabardine staggered in, under the weight of a well-distended bag that gave him much of the appearance of an old jew clothesman in Petticoat-lane.

"By the blessed mother of God!" cried the Prior, "thou art the best fox here, brother Philip, for carrying off the fowls from the city's hen-roosts."

"Turn out thy bread-bag," cried another, while he ran to help him take the load from his back. "God's wounds! thou hast something more toothsome in it than old crusts, I'll be bound."

"A green-goose, by the holy St. Boniface!" exclaimed a tun-bellied monk, as he dragged the dead bird forth by the neck, and smacked his wet lips while he held it up to the gaze of the admiring crew.

"Yea," said brother Philip, shaking his bent head in mock humility, "I did get it from a boor's wife whom I did let kiss the blessed tooth of the holy St. Jerome that I carried about my neck."

"Ugh! here be half a dozen cold potato dumplings that be hard enough to bombard the citadel with," cried another whose shaven crown bore a strong resemblance to the bony top of an umbrella-handle; and the monk shuddered as he let the clammy balls fall from his fingers heavily on to the table.

"They were the dole of the Master-shoemaker's daughter that liveth on the 'old bone-chopper's bank,'" returned brother Philip, exchanging significant glances with the prior.

"I know the fellow," growled out the head of the brethren, "and do suspect him of being an accursed Hus-site in his heart, believing in Gospel-freedom and salvation by faith, and such like wickedness; for he cometh to be shriven only at Shrove-tide every year. An I do have the shriving of him next, I'll set the miscreant a penance that will make him understand the worth of good works, I warrant me."

"What! hast thou now, brother Irenæus?" the others asked of him who was turning out the contents of brother Philip's bag.

"A flagon of something," he answered; and then, after having taken a sup of the liquor, shouted joyously, "*Mead*, by all my hopes of salvation, and a very fine brewage too," he went on, while he rolled his tongue about in his mouth to make the most of the flavour. "There be at least a couple of chopins of the drink," the monk said, as he shook the stone jug close to his ear, in order to see how full it was.

Brother Philip again bent his head reverently, while he

answered, "Old Huber, the blind Frenchman, that doth keep the apiary out by the city meadows, did give it me in exchange for a phial-full of holy-water ; for I did tell him the sacred fluid would keep the thunder off, and that it had been newly blessed by our holy father only that morning."

"Good!" answered the prior, "and there be plenty more for thee, brother, to turn into wine like this ; for I did consecrate a puncheon-full from the well hard by, while I was about the work to-day ; and the labour be not very hard, thou knowest."

And so the holy men went on, commenting on the piety or parsimony of the donors, as now a sucking-pig, and now a net of hard-boiled eggs—then a bunch of onions, or a gallon of meal, or even the "umbles" of a stag, were drawn forth from the depths of the wallet.

Presently came one with his sack as empty and limp as a wind-sail in a calm, and he was saluted with the cries of, "Oh, oh ! brother Hieronymus."

"Hast thou been playing bowls on the green all day, brother?" asked one—

"Or lying in bed reading thy beloved Thomas Aquinas, mayhap?" added another.

"Nay," responded the other, "I cannot crook myself to the tricks of this beggars'-work. All I did gather be

these six thuronenser silver coins* that the old witch Anlys did give me, on confessing that she had put the evil eye upon a neighbour of hers, and my telling her that such was the tax due to the Church for her sinfulness."

"Good!" said the prior; "an I can but catch that Hussite shoemaker, who sent us the cold dumplings, I'll make him pay the same amount for his heresy."

At this point, one of the friars whose turn it was to act as gate-keeper to the monastery, rushed into the hall with the news that Walter Schock, the robber, had entered the sanctuary and claimed protection against the officers of the Judgment-house, at the Prior's hands.

"Hang him, for a scape-grace!" cried the Prior, "for he be the Church-burglar, who doth delight to steal the silver ciboriums, and the holy-oil boxes of the same precious metal, from the sacristies of our blessed chapels. Go bid him pay the six-and-thirty silver coins which be the

* One such silver coin was equal to four and a half groschens, German money, or about five-pence English. There was a formal tariff of the fines to be paid to the Church, on commission of certain crimes. Poisoning cost (like necromancy), six such coins, and heresy the same; sacrilege, burning, robbery, perjury, simony, and the carnal transgressions of those in orders, thirty-six such silver coins; whilst the adultery of lay-men was appraised at four coins.

tax set upon his sin, and then woe betide the hirelings of the State that dare lay hand upon him."

Whereupon the friars, as they continued to turn out the contents of the different wallets of the beggar-brothers who came tottering in, one by one, began to speak angrily against the growing authority of the city officers.

"The heretics!" ejaculated one; "they be the followers of that devil's child, Ziska, the Hussite leader, and do think to lift up the law of men higher than that of God."

"The outrageous ones!" added another. "Hath not the burgomaster dared to put forth an order, saying, 'that the serving-maids of priests, and all *other* common women, shall wear their mantles over their head when they do go abroad in the streets, on pain of losing the garments.'"

"Pfui!" thundered a third; "but we will let them see that the Church hath power above all; for as Pope Adrian IV., the Englishman, did make the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa hold his stirrup for him while he mounted his white palfrey; and Pope Celestine III. did kick the crown from the head of the kneeling Henry VI., to show his power of making and unmaking kings, so will we let these haughty city magistrates know that the holy fathers of the Church are high above the power of the State and its upstart justices."

"For my part," said a stern-looking monk, who had sat for some time telling his beads in a corner, "I do reckon it a shame that the holy fathers of the Church, now-a-days, should need any such laws to be made about their cooks; and father Andreas, our Provincial, would tell ye as much: for is it not known, to our scandal, that the income of the Bishop of Constanz was 6000 guilders the richer last year, merely by the fines paid by the priests for their frailties with their serving-women."

By this time the wallets were all emptied, and the long tables groaned beneath the load of poultry, porkers, fish, game, meat, kids, eggs, cheese, honey, fruit, firkins of beer, kegs of apple-wine, milk, cakes, meal, corn, vegetables, oil, salt, spices, herbs, and loaves,—ay, and even old broken crusts of bread, and bits of rag, too; for in the rounds of the friars, not only were the homesteads visited, but the markets, and the butchers' quarters, as well—besides the warehouses, the quays, the shops, and the citizens' houses; so that the larders of the town were swept as clean by the friars, as if they had been so many "scavenger-birds," kept to clear away the refuse of the city. Their motto was, "Take aught with thankfulness; turn away naught with pride."

And when the several viands had been all told by the prior, he ordered the crusts, the dumplings, and the meal,

with some of the "green-meat," to be taken and distributed among the wretched objects who still clamoured at the gates of the building, so that the poor might be fed before they sat down to take their share of the feast, for not till then did the good, holy men begin to discuss the dainties they had reserved for themselves.

The meal had been long finished, and the satisfied brothers lay, many of them, dosing on the benches round the hall, and others playing at their favourite game of "tables," before any one gave heed to the absence of the new young choir-scholars.

Suddenly, as the double-chinned prior sat drinking from the flagon of mead he had set aside for himself, he said to one of the "*commendatories*" near him, "By the holy cross! the youngsters from Mansfeld have never come back. What can keep them so long?"

"Mayhap they have missed their way, father," answered the other, unloosing the sandals from his naked feet, for he was foot-sore after his long rounds, "and I did tell the lads, ere they started this morning, they would fare better at the farmers' houses in the outskirts than among the merchants' dwellings in the city."

"They do know but little of the beggars' trade, I fear me," chimed in a third who sat near, working a gaudy altar-

CHAPTER XV.

THE LITTLE BEGGAR-BOYS.

To a boy who had been brought up as strictly as young Martin Luther, a day's starving had become no great hardship ; but little Hans Reinecke was an only child, and consequently had been comparatively pampered by his parents from his cradle. He therefore took the prior's stern speech more bitterly to heart, and wept for a long time on reaching his room.

" Why did his father ever send him to such a place, so far away from them all?" he asked of his sturdier companion. " He would write to his mother and let her know what hard-hearted men they had fallen among, but then he couldn't tell how to get the letter to her." Next, he would vow that he would run away home again the first thing in the morning; and on Martin reminding him that it would not be easy to travel for twenty hours without food, then he would declare he would go down to the wharf, at day-break on the morrow, and beg of the sailors to take him off to sea

with them—and then, perhaps, he would be drowned, and never see father and mother any more. Whereupon his tears began to flow anew, and the big lad cried like a baby-boy on his friend's shoulder, as they sat together, with their arms round each other's neck, on the edge of the tall bedstead in that bare, dismal cell of the beggarly old Augustiner Kloster.

On the morrow, however, the good Provincial, Andreas Proles, had returned from his inspection of one of the neighbouring monasteries in the district, and on hearing that the youths had not broken their fast on the previous night, he upbraided the prior for his want of charity to the little fellows, and ordered a meal to be given them immediately; asking whether it were not the special pride of monks to feed the fasting, and adding, with all the Catholic superstition of the time, that "one such good work was worth an age of penance and scourging."

But, unfortunately for the new comers, the visits of the Provincial to the head-quarters of the Augustine order were like those of angels, "few, and far between," and in the interim, the prior, who now conceived a strong dislike to the boys, on whose account he had been reprimanded by his superior, sent them off each day with their bread-bags on the longest rounds, and into neighbourhoods

which he knew were the most niggardly in their contributions.

Still, it must not be supposed that all the friars in that community were as severe as Father Benedictus, the prior of the establishment. Among a body of men, the majority of whom had parted with all their worldly property, and sworn to lead a beggar's life, merely because, in the silly superstition of the age, they believed such a lot to be the most acceptable to the Creator, there was many a righteous though misguided soul ; and if some believed in the great atoning virtues of self-punishment, and the torturing of the flesh, some, on the other hand, had a deep faith in the grace of good works ; so that not a few, unknown to the prior, delighted to save from their evening meal some of the more dainty scraps, for the less fortunate choir scholars. But even with these repeated acts of kindness the life of Martin and Hans among the Augustine friars at Magdeburg was anything but easy or agreeable ; for in the days when scourging, and all manner of bodily hardships were thought to be of paramount virtue for the regeneration of man's erring nature, the lads, on the commission of the least fault, were commanded to bare their backs to the rod ; and, as Peter Damian, the monk, had ingeniously calculated in the eleventh century, that one

thousand lashes from a scourge could be administered in the same time as it took a person to chant the Psalms of David, the prior delighted to chasten the minds of the little fellows, by ordering them to receive some hundred or two blows from the rod which was kept specially for the castigation of the inmates of the monastery, and to sing as many Psalms the while as there were hundreds in the number of lashes prescribed.

Nevertheless, Martin bore up with his usual heroism against the bitterness of the circumstances which surrounded him ; while little Hans, who was made of softer metal, soon grew terribly home-sick. The boy, indeed, could no longer bear to look at the gaudy shows of the Romish Church, now that he was tired of seeing the pompous processions of golden-robed priests, attended by their javelined church-officers, with the Archbishop Ernst, of Magdeburg, under the silver canopy (called the "heaven") walking in state at their head, that filled the streets on the many high-days and holidays of that cathedral city. For the everlasting sight of the finery wearied him to death, now that he longed to be back among his native hills and streams, and to hear the nightingale sing in the Mansfeld woods on the castle-hill, and to gather the snow-bells in the meadows by the Wipper.

To young Luther, on the other hand, everything was so new—the shipping, the great river, and the sailors ; the citadel, the massive fortifications, and the soldiers ; the Cathedral, the pomp of the high masses, and the squalor and dirt of the monks and friars—that there was for a time an entrancing fascination in it all to him. He loved to be present at the gorgeous church ceremonies, not from any religious feeling, but from the same boyish motive as he delighted to be taken to see the “golden hall,” in the castle of his native town ; for not only did the noble architecture of the lofty groined arches of the *Dom Kirche* (the first he had ever seen in his life) fill his mind with the same fervid feeling of awe as the depths of a forest glade, but the melodious thunder of the organ, and the fine chanting of the hundred voices, as if it were but one great throat resounding in the chancel, astounded the music-loving lad with delicious wonderment. Then, again, the town’s-folk who attended “high mass,” made up so motley and novel a throng, that the boy was tickled amazingly with the sight ; for there were to be seen, as the chronicles tell us, nobles and knights, in their fine doublets and hose, with their jewel-hilted swords and their rattling-pointed shoes ; and many of these came with their hunting-dogs and falcons, which, in order to wile away the time during the

tedium of the Aristotelian sermon, they often let fly among the star-bespangled arches of the cathedral ; and there were the fur-robed, under and over-burghermasters, attended by the city fantassins. Thither, too, came the merchants and captains of vessels, to make their bargains and procure freights for their ships ; and they spake out openly, as if the aisles of the church had been the hall of an exchange ; while the peasant women, in their bright-coloured kerchiefs, dropped in on their way to the market with their sucking-pigs or live geese in the baskets at their back ; so that the noise was such, when the pealing of the organ ceased to drown the general clamour, that the priest had often to stop the service, and demand from the congregation that silence which it was idle for the red-gowned and gauntleted beadle to enjoin.

Moreover, Martin, boy-like, was as highly amused as a child at a pantomime with the comic character that then distinguished the church service at Easter-tide ; for at such time it was customary for the priests to endeavour to excite the laughter of all who listened to their sermons, and with this view some would imitate the sounds of different birds and beasts in the pulpit. One would whoop like a cuckoo, and others cackle like geese, while almost all told funny stories of a half religious and half

fairy-tale character,—such as how St. Peter was forced to let the dissipated knight LUSTIG into Heaven, because the Ritter had given the Saint a farthing when his holiness appeared to him as a beggar; and St. Peter, in return for the good act, had presented him with a magic travelling pouch, which had the property of granting all his wishes. It was at Easter, also, that the wags of the town were allowed to secrete themselves behind the large wooden image of a nondescript, called the “Roaring Ape” (*Rohr Affe*), which stood beside the principal organ; and from the back of this the roysterers would delight the gaping multitude by singing a variety of merry and satirical songs.

The novelty, however, of such grand scenes and merry-makings as made up the greater part of the religious ceremonies in those days at length wore off—even as the gilt will from the finest gingerbread; and then Martin grew almost as sick at heart as his less excitable companion. There was, indeed, so much of mere “lip service” in the prayers of the monks, which were continually sounding in his ears, that though the boy was not yet old enough for the babblings to breed any sense of contempt in his soul, they excited no religious sympathy within him; and he heard them day after day with the same indifference as a lad at school listens to the eternal repetition of exercises.

“Do thou, brother Pica,” the lad, as he went in to sweep out the cells, would hear one monk, who was fond of lying in bed to read the books of the school-men, say to another, who was up and ready for matins,—“do thou say prayers for me too, so that I may get my indulgence from the father, and I will do the same for thee when thou dost want to dose after dinner.” Then others of the more devout he would sometimes find already on their knees in front of the crucifix that was nailed against the wall of their chamber; and as they cried aloud, “Oh, Lord, stand by me with thy help,” they would add, in the same breath, “Boy, mind and put me some fresh straw in my bed to-night.” After which they would pray again, “Let the blessed army of martyrs plead for me at thy throne, oh, God;” and exclaim, the next moment, “How long is it to the morning meal, lad?” *

* This is the version given by Martin Luther himself, after seceding from the monastic body.

CHAPTER XVI.

SICK, AND AWAY FROM HOME.

IN this manner weeks and months wore on, and the boys managed to live somehow till Christmas time. Indeed, even after a long apprenticeship to the mendicants' trade, they were anything but experts at begging ; for they could not, like the monks, promise to rid the zealot peasantry of some prescribed penance for so much food or money ; nor had they any so-called precious relics to allow them to touch for the same fee. The folk, therefore, generally cared little for the supplications of the boys ; in fact, the church and state burdens upon the people were too heavy in those days to make them do other than turn a deaf ear to the youths' cries of "*Panem, propter Deum*" from those they neither feared nor revered.

As the boys got but little, therefore, they generally *haul* but little. At the Whitsuntide feast, however, their mothers did not forget to send them a box stored with sausages

and cakes, together with a few sols packed in one corner for pocket money. Then, again, the same grateful remembrance was repeated on each of their birthdays; so they managed to get along to the end of the year, at which season they had made up their mind they should do pretty well, for then they knew they were certain to get a number of gifts from the peasants, in the suburbs, for singing the welcome carols at their doors.

Accordingly, on the morning of the Nativity, the two little fellows trudged off as soon as matins were over, as light-hearted as larks, on their way to the adjoining village of Sudenburg—there to warble the new carols they had got by heart expressly for the occasion.

At the end of this village stood a “Hof,” belonging to one of the yeoman farmers thereabouts, whose goodwife had taken pity on the boys once before; so, mounting the steep flight of steps, they took their stand under the roof of the tall porch, and commenced their hymn, singing together, in the darkness, in exquisite unison:—

“Praises now from all on earth! ’tis the day of Jesu’s birth; of a virgin born, in sooth—angels glory o’er the youth.

“Kyrie eliason!”

“Hark!” said Martin; “the good woman be coming to us. Dost thou not see the light within moving this

way? Sing on, Hans, and the Lord may send us a good meal for our pains."

So while they shivered in the sharp, stinging wind of the early Christmas morning, they trilled forth another stave of their wassail song:—

"Only child of God's own kind, in a manger shepherds find—God-babe, sent our sins to free, by suff'ring our humanity!
*"Kyrle eliason!"**

To the horror of the youngsters, however, as the door of the sitting-room opened, they saw only the figure of a burly boor, on the point of advancing towards them; and no sooner did they hear the man cry out, in a loud and harsh voice, as he began groping about in the darkness without, "Boys, where are ye?" than the frightened lads scampered off as fast as startled hares; while the farmer shouted the louder, "Come hither, ye young vagabonds, and I'll give ye something for your singing at this early hour."

The words were of so equivocal a character, that the

* The above is a literal translation of one of Luther's "*Weinachte's Gesange*," and though composed at a later period of life, the words have been chosen as expressing the sentiments which our hero probably sought to give utterance to on the occasion above described.

timid youths translated the doubtful term "something" into everything that was disagreeable, and fled all the faster for the invitation; while the farmer himself stood with a great hunch of "*Christ-weck*" (Christmas cake that is still baked in every house at this season), and laughing at the panic he had caused among the little timid-hearted carol singers.*

At length the panic-stricken boys halted to take breath, and on looking round, beheld the goodwife beside her husband at the door, with a lantern in her hand, and beckoning them to return. The sight of the friendly dame at once assured them that no harm was intended; so they turned their steps back to the homestead, and received, not only the large wedge of cake originally cut for them, but a cup of warm beer in addition, as recompense for the fright they had suffered.

The day being thus propitiously begun, the spirits of the youngsters rose in proportion, and as they grew bolder in their beggings, and entered the passages and sometimes the kitchens of the farmhouses, to sing their carols to the inmates, they found that they were seldom sent away empty-handed, but, on the contrary, were often laden with

* Luther himself related the above story in after life.

such dainties as the season provided; so that, when they returned to the monastery that night with their fat wallets on their back, they were applauded by the friars, for the first time since entering the doors; and as the dried apple chips, bags of prunes, and great pieces of cake—besides a small heap of figures of hares and men stamped in sweet paste, together with a bladder or two of “*muss*” (a kind of plum squash, which to this day remains the favourite preserve of the peasantry), the more sweet-toothed among the friars were loud in their praises as to the assiduity and perseverance of the young choir-scholars.

Nor did the luck which had now set in fail the young beggars till many a day; for before the end of the week the great feast of the new year had come round again, and then they sang their “*Sylvester*” hymns at the farmers’ doors; after which they entered the passages and cried out, in a loud voice, after the manner and custom of the country,—

“Lo, we have entered upon another year; therefore, we come to greet ye with our best wishes, and to pray that ye may be blessed with peace, unity, happiness, long life, and eternal welfare! so let us praise God, good friends.”

Nor were the Sylvester greetings left unrewarded; for on the evening of that day also, they returned to the

Kloister bending once more beneath the load of good things in their sack, and with some few copper coins, too, in the pouches at their side.

Moreover, a few days afterwards, a box of the customary new year's gifts arrived from home, and then, as all, even down to little Lena, had put something in the packing case, in remembrance of their love for the absent ones, why, both Martin and Hans had sufficient to gladden and comfort them for many a day to come.

But, alas ! every day cannot be a feast-day, and the new year's festivities soon come to an end. Further, then follow saving and retrenchment to make up for the prodigality of the previous time. Moreover, the end of the winter-time, when the last year's store is drawing to a close, is generally the period of the greatest want and privation. So, indeed, found our boy hero and his little companion to their cost, while the long, cold weather seemed as if it would never break. In a week or two after Christmas, they met with as little luck as ever in their beggars' wanderings ; and where their voices had been welcomed a few days before in the gladness of the general merry-making, the doors were no sooner opened to their knock than they were immediately shut in their faces, and that with many a savage reviling ; for the people would scold at

them for letting the cold air into their rooms, asking where they thought the wood was to come from, and upbraiding them as part of the lazy monkish crew.

Ay, beggary was a bitter, hard lot *then*. It was hard to want, and want assuredly they did most keenly; but the scolding and cursing of the boors were harder still to bear—as cutting to them, indeed, as the bitter snow-wind that they had to face when the doors were shut against them with an oath, and they were asked for the hundredth time, “where they thought the wood came from,” by the peasants snuggling over the hearth.

Poor lads! they had never been well fed since leaving home, and their long fasting at the fall of the year left them but little strength to bear up now against the biting, searching cold at the beginning of it. So, though Martin fought for a time, with all his innate stubbornness, against the aches and pains in his limbs, and the burning blood in his head, he was obliged, at last, to succumb to the hardships of his life, and to acknowledge to his little companion that he was too ill to continue to drag one foot after the other on his daily rounds.

Bedridden he was; dead-beaten with long suffering; and then, as he lay wasting under the ravages of a devouring fever, dear little Hans would sit by him all

the day nursing and comforting the restless, pining boy ; and in the afternoon sally forth to beg cooling drink and dried fruits for him, of those monks whom he knew had taken pity on them before. In the long, dark evenings, too, the faithful little friend would tell Martin how he had heard that good Andreas Proles would be back shortly, and say he would go down on his bended knees, he would, and beg of the kind old man to send a letter home to their fathers and mothers, telling them how ill and badly off they were, and praying them to come and fetch them back, ere it was too late.

As the heat of the fever lulled, and left poor Martin as weak in body as a dotard, he grew alike depressed in mind ; and he craved to be back home in Mansfeld again, with a stronger yearning even than he had felt for food. What would he not give for one look at the old familiar faces ! How he longed to clasp little Lena again in his arms, and to kiss his sisters for all their kind pleadings for him ; and then he would upbraid himself for not having thanked them enough for their loving services, and call himself hard names, saying, " Yes, it be too true, I *have* a proud devil's spirit in my bosom ;" whereupon he would weep convulsively, and pray to St. Anna that she would plead for him with the Great God to give him strength

to live until he saw them all once more; for then he would go, like the Prodigal Son, whom his father had so often told him about, and throw himself at the old man's feet, and, as he kissed his knees, ask him for the forgiveness that his accursed pride would not let him beg for, ere he quitted their roof. Oh! how bitterly he be-rued it all now. He knew he had done wrong; he knew it at the time his father bade him acknowledge it; but his stubborn heart would not let him utter the words: and so as he cried on, he called aloud, first, to his parent for forgiveness, and then to God for mercy for his sins; saying, he had been sorely but righteously punished for it all, but surely his long-suffering would make some atonement for his ill-doings.

When the paroxysm had passed away, little Hans, to divert his sad, stricken companion, began to talk of the favourite haunts of their youth. He only wished, the little fellow proceeded, he could take Martin to the Wimmelsberg Hills, and let him lie out there on the grass with the warm sun shining upon his limbs, and the beautiful mountain breezes to fan his cheek, as he listened to the chimes of those charmed church-bells—the sound of which was known to cure every disease. Hadn't they both seen, he went on, the sick brought there on litters, and watched

them sit up in their beds as they heard the bells begin to ring. Oh! yes, their home was the most beautiful spot in all the world—how much better, too, than that big, ugly city they were in, with hardly a hill about it, and not a wood for miles round, but only dusty warehouses and sloppy wharves instead.

“Yea,” said Martin weakly, as he turned his head upon the hard bolster, while his bright, feverish eyes flashed with pleasure at the home-remembrance; “and then the little chapels, Hans, round about dear Mansfeld; how much prettier are they than this great wilderness of a Cathedral here. Only think,” cried the boy, “of that beautiful little God’s-house, called ‘the Holy Cross,’ near Hettstädt, by us, which the burghers Claus and Heine Bosenstedt caused to be built just by the Molbischen Thor, after their pilgrimage to the holy grave at Palestine; and in such-wise that the distance of the chapel from the Rathhaus, in the middle of the market-place, was the very same distance as Golgotha was to the Judgment-hall of Pilate. Wasn’t it beautiful of the pious burgesses, to have thought of such a thing?” and the languid boy smiled as the image of the well-known place flitted through his mind.

“Then,” asked Hans, with all a youngster’s delight in the

marvellous, "have they got any sacred swords here, I should like to know, such as the one in *Ægidian Cloister*, that lets fall three drops of blood every Good Friday! Oh! it's a wretched, dull, stupid place, this *Magdeburg*, that it is."

"Or any statues to the Virgin Mary, like that in our *Gerbstädt* nunnery, that noddeth to such as do bring her offerings which she findeth favour in?" chimed in Martin, delighted to recall the wonders of the country round about their home; "and that turneth away her head from those who be niggard in their gifts? Oh! what would I not give, Hans," he cried, as he tried to lift himself up in his bed, "to hear the sound, once more, of the bells of the cattle grazing in the *Mansfeld Valley* meadows."

"Or to see even the face of old Fritz, the cowherd?" added the little *Reinecke*.

And thus they went on, each recalling to the other the marvels and the beauties of their native place, and both wishing from the depth of their little hearts that they were back among them again, surrounded by all their friends and playmates; and far away from that wretched mockery of a monkish life, and great merchant city, where they were utterly desolate and friendless.

At this juncture they were gladdened by the appearance of Andreas Proles at their cell-door. Little Hans Reinecke let Martin's hand fall from his palm, as he sprang from his sick friend's bed, and rushed towards the Provincial, crying, with clasped hands, "Oh! send us back home, good father; do! do! ere we die here from very want."

Father Andreas drew the lad tenderly to his side, and, laying his hand upon the little fellow's head, replied, "Be comforted, my son! thou hast a good friend in me. See, I have brought some grapes for the little sufferer yonder. I be but this moment back from a long round of kloister visitings;" and then, kneeling down by the bedside of the young invalid, the Provincial fed him with the fruit as he plucked the berries, one by one, from the bunch he held.

"How nice and cold and refreshing they be," said Martin, as the delicious juice filled his parched mouth. "I never tasted fruit half as good before. Oh! thank thee, good friend. I should have died here, I know, but for thy help, and never have seen any of them at home again."

"But thou'lt soon be healed now, my son," returned the father; "and then, by my troth, thou shalt go back to thine elders. So, be thou of good cheer, my little man," he added, turning to the sorrowing Hans; and, as he did

so he handed him, from the platter he had placed upon the bed, a bunch of the grapes, telling the boy that a Ham-burgh captain had sent them to him as a choice delicacy ; and these, with the addition of a sea-biscuit, made a meal for the lad, of which he had not tasted the like for many a day.

And when the father had fed the children, he consoled them with all kinds of loving words, and narrated to them Bible-stories and quaint, half-religious fairy tales about the miracles worked by the saints—after the following fashion ; and, as nearly as possible, in the following words :—“ Now, my children,” he began, “ I will tell ye a story about the marvels wrought by the young Holy Elizabeth, who, though a princess of the Landgraves of the Wartburg, did pass her whole life in tending the poor and nursing the sick round about Eisenach. Listen !

“ At the beginning of the 14th century there did live a pious lady, who was born the Countess of Schwarzburg, and afterwards did become the wife of the Graf Burchardt, of Mansfeld—a place,” said the father, playfully, “ that some little folk not a hundred miles off should know something about, I fancy. Now the Countess was bent on making a shrine-faring to the grave of the holy Elizabeth at Marburg, in Hesse, and on reaching the chapel she did

betake herself to kneel down on the steps before it, where the stones be all worn hollow by the knees of the many pilgrims who have flocked thither.

“The shrine which did hold the saint’s body was one of the most costly kind. It was of oak, studded with raised figures of solid silver, and richly inlaid with pearls, cameos, and the largest and rarest gems ; whilst against the wall at the back was a carved tablet showing the saint as she did lie in her coffin, with a crowd of cripples and sick persons grouped around the body ; her soul hovering above her head on its way to Heaven, whence Christ stretcheth forth his hand to receive it.”

“How beautiful it must be to behold it all,” said Martin.

“Go on, I pray thee, good father,” begged Hans.

“Well, my sons,” went on the Provincial, “it did so happen that it was market-day in Marburg, at the time of the Grafin’s visit, and many a peasant woman did come thither to say a prayer and beg the sainted friend of the poor to bring them luck in their dealings that morning. Among the throng was a poor man carrying a babe in his arms, that was so blind it hadn’t the slightest signs of eyes ; and this child it was his wish to lay upon the shrine of the holy Elizabeth. But, alas ! he could not get near

enough to the grave, owing to the crowd of peasants and others kneeling and praying before it."

"And what did the man with the poor blind babe then?" inquired Hans.

"I do know," said Martin, equally taken with the story; "he did get the good Countess of Mansfeld to place it on the shrine for him."

"Right, and yet wrong, my son," was the answer; "true that the simple peasant, having no knowledge of the Graf, did ask the good soul to hold the babe for him until he should come back from the market-place, and that she did kindly undertake to do the like. Whereupon, while the babe was sleeping in her arms, with its eyeless face upturned towards hers, the heart of the Countess was moved with pity for the poor blind little one; and straightway she did bend her steps to the shrine, and lay the child on the top of the coffin, just over the heart of the dead saint within."

"Yea; well," cried the lads together, "and what then?"

"Why then the pious Graf," went on the father, "did pray heartily to the great God that he would, for the sake of His love for the holy Elizabeth, be pleased to vouchsafe unto that blind babe the blessed light of eyes; and there-

upon, the others kneeling at the shrine, did offer up the same prayer with all their hearts likewise.

"The words were no sooner uttered, than, lo! the tight skin beneath the brows did begin to crack like to hard parchment, which doth rustle, thou knowest, when it be torn; and then the flesh, at the part where the eyes should have been, was rent asunder. On this the babe did begin to cry in a loud voice; whereupon the Grafin did hasten towards it from the steps where she was still kneeling. But when she did fold it in her arms, and look in its face again, she did find that it had large, beautiful, and clear blue eyes, through which it was gazing up at her with thankfulness. Then all those who were standing by and had seen the marvel that had been wrought, did thank God and praise Him with one voice."

The simple lads were delighted with the wonderful story, nor had they either of them at that time the wit to doubt the truth of it; so they begged of the good father to tell them another and another, till at length the bell for vespers put an end to the curious narratives.

The next day, and the day after that, were passed in a similar manner, for Andreas Proles never failed in coming.

to them; and there the good Provincial would sit, hour after hour, feeding the one and nursing the other, while, to beguile the tedium of the sick bed, he recounted to them both, now the story of St. Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins, who were slaughtered by the Huns on their return from a pilgrimage to the Pope, and now that of St. Werner, the martyr boy, who was crucified by the Jews, and his body, after being flung into the river, carried several miles up against the stream.

And thus the time went on, till Martin was strong enough to leave his bed; shortly after which, it so happened, that one of the wandering monks in connection with the preaching order (*die Predigerordens*) of the Augustine friars had come to Magdeburg on his way back to the head-quarters of that branch of the brotherhood located at Widerstadt; whereupon the Provincial informed the boys that now was the time for them to write home to their friends, as the priest was about to leave for Mansfeld on the morrow.

Accordingly, little Hans described, as briefly and as well as he could, their long sufferings and the dangerous illness of poor Martin, saying, "that though his friend was able to shuffle about their cell, with some one to support him, he had hardly the power yet to guide a pen,

as they would see by the one line that the boy had insisted upon adding."

This single line was written in so tremulous a character, that it seemed more like the hand-writing of a palsied grey-beard than a mere stripling, and was to the following effect:

"I ask thy forgiveness, father; let me have it ere it be too late."

To tell the sequel needs but a few words. By the end of that week the same tilted wagon (as had carried Hans Luther and Gretha over to Eisenach) drew up at the gate of the Augustine monastery in the old fishers' bank of Magdeburg, bringing Dame Luther and Gottlieb, who had come to bear young Martin and Hans Reinecke back to their home again.

And great was the joy of all as they passed through the Sudenburg gate the day after, on the road to their beloved city of Mansfeld.

"Farewell, Magdeburg!" cried the lads, as they clapped their hands with delight; "and farewell, Andreas Proles!" they both added, with a sigh.

CHAPTER XVII.

OLD EISENACH AND YOUNG LUTHER.

"WITHIN, there ! gate, gate ! Hearest thou, night-watch ?" cried one outside the Nicolai Tower, that was (and is still) the principal entrance to the town of Eisenach.

"Who clamoureth without at so unseemly an hour of the night ? The clock hath knocked ten this quarter of an hour past. Be it master-tailor Pfefferkorn, the roysterer, gone loose again—eh ?" inquired the burly night-watch, from within ; "and hast thou allowance, thou night-lamp, from the city-commandant to be out after the gates be closed ?"

"Nay," was the timid reply, breathed from outside.

"Art thou a burgher here ?" continued the other, sharply, as the voice now sounded strange to him ; "and what be thy name ?"

"I be called Martin Luther," said the person without.

"Luther ! Luther !" mused the night-watch, mumbling the word over and over again in his mouth : "there be none of that name dwelling in Eisenach. The Luthers be

Hennebergers, an my memory do serve me rightly, and belong to Kupfersuhl rather than to this town. What wantest thou here, boy?" he asked, as he opened the little trap-door that was cut in the ponderous gate, and looked through the gratings at the youngster on the outside.

"I do bear a letter to the master tanner, Heinrich Lindemann, dwelling in the Löbers Gasse," ran the boy's response; for Martin was growing half-frightened at the long catechising.

"And what hast thou to do with Tanner-master Lindemann at such an hour, lad?" went on the suspicious watchman, bent on admitting no thief nor enemy within the town.

"He be my uncle; and my mother, his sister, hath sent me with this writing to him," replied the youth, holding up the letter for the man to see.

"Hand it in," was the order, "and let me look if thy words be true." And when the night-watch had minutely scrutinised the address, while he held the letter upside-down (for it is needless to say the mediæval official was unable to read), he asked again through the gratings, "and whence comest thou?"

"From the city Mansfeld, an it please thee, in the countship of that name."

The answer made the watchman scratch his head in wonderment. "From Mansfeld!" he echoed; "and didst thou not erewhiles tell me thou wast a Luther, boy? Nor didst thou gainsay my speech when I did say the Luthers were Hennebergers; and now, thou rogue, thou dost tell me to my face thou art a Mansfelder. I do fear me thou art an Italian instead," he added, with a significant shake of the head—Italian being the name for everything that was hateful at that period.

"I prithee hear me," Martin expostulated. "My father did quit Henneberg ere I was born, and did make Mansfeld his abiding-place thereafter," pled the little fellow, in his anxiety to gain admission within the gates.

"Soh!" said the pacified gatekeeper; "and how is thy father called?"

"The master-smelter, Hans Luther," was the reply.

"Hm!" mused the watchman; "yea, I do call to mind there was such a Luther here some twelvemonths past, at the burial of Johann Braun, the vicar—yea, it was when the charcoal-burner, Kunz, was seized and cast into the dog-hole at the Wartburg for calling John the Steadfast a swinehound in an open beer-house."

But the night-watch was hardly satisfied yet as to the character of the stranger outside the gates; so he asked

again, "And what is thy business in Eisenach, youngster? Thy letter might have been sent by the pack-horse, and so have saved thee the trouble of bringing it."

"I do come here," urged young Martin Luther, "to go to the Currend school of the Franciscaners."

"Soh! the school of the grey friars, thou meanest. Well, and hast thou a pass?" proceeded the watchman.

"Yea, I have a letter of safe-conduct from Albrecht, the Count of Mansfeld, to the Prince-Elector Frederick the Wise, of Thuringia," returned Martin.

"Thou shouldst have brought a pass, boy, from the burgomaster of thy town, addressed to the town-councillors of this," the watchman growled out; "for Eisenach be a burgher's city, and the Landgraves of Thuringia be only allowed, by the grace of the citizens, to enter its gates. But pass on," he said, as he opened a little door, which seemed as if it was one of the panels taken out of the gate itself. "Thou hast a simple story at the end of thy tongue that *may* be true; though woe betide thee, an thou hast lied, for then thy lot will be to wear about thy neck the iron collar that thou canst see chained to the wall within the town hard by."

"Good night, friend!" said Martin respectfully, while he lifted his cap from his head on entering the gateway;

and the boy was about to proceed on his way with the customary night-parting of "Sleep well," when the janitor cried after him—

"Heida! come back, thou little swindler. Who is to sit here, dost think, and open the gates to thee in the dead of the night for naught—eh? Three pfennige is the toll allowed by the burgomaster. So hand it out, with whatsoever drink-money added to it that thy bounty may please to give;" and so saying the man extended his horny palm towards the boy, while he proceeded to fasten the gates again with his other hand.

At the summons the youth began to fumble in his travelling-pouch for his purse, and at length drawing forth a little tassel-like leathern-bag he set to work scraping over the few trifling coins it contained, by the light of the fat-lamp hanging within the gateway, till he found the piece required.

"There be a 'sixer' for thee, friend," exclaimed the lad, and slipping the bit of brass into the man's hand, he bent his steps towards the town.

As young Martin emerged from under the archway into the narrow Nicolai Platz, in front of the Church and kloister of the same name, which stood beside the old

Roman gate-way, he beheld, in the darkness (for the lights were all out, it being supposed to be moonshine), the figure of a man in a long cloak and leathern helmet, holding a javelin in one hand, while the other grasped a small instrument that, as he whirled it round and round, made a noise closely resembling a child's penny rattle; after which he proceeded to chant the following quaint verses :—

“ Good sirs, give ear while I unfold
The clock hath now the tenth-hour toll'd,
Then quench each fire, and douse each light,
So that no harm the town affright,
And praise ye, God the Lord.”*

From the Nicolai-gate to the Tanner's Lane (or *Löbers Gasse*, as it was and is called) was but a stone's throw. The town, however, was so still, the houses so dark, and the streets so desolate, at such an hour, in such curfew times, that Martin was bewildered as to which road he

* This ancient custom is continued to the present day in Eisenach, the German verses repeated by the watchman being as follows :—

“ *Hör't Ihr Herren und lasst euch sagen
Die Glocke hat zehn geschlagen;
Bewahr't das Feuer und auch das Licht,
Auf dass der Stadt kein Schaden geschiht.
Und lobet Gott den Herrn !* ”

“ Nay, my son, that be the Jew’s Lane (*‘Judengasse’*), which is now the *Carls Platz*, or principal street of the town, and the gates at either end of it be open to no one between sun-set and sun-rise. The stream at thy feet be the *‘Tanners’ Brook,’* and do thou follow that towards the *‘Rock Gate’* (*Felsen Thor*), and thou’lt see at the end, on thy right hand, just before reaching the gate itself, the house of Tanner-master Lindemann, whom thou seeketh.’

At his uncle’s house Martin met with a hearty welcome. He found at first, it is true, some little difficulty in arousing the sleeping inmates and making them understand who he was, and what he wanted so late in the night, as he talked from the street with the people, whose night-capped heads were thrust out from the little windows above. Nevertheless, when once they had made out that the son of Gretha Luther was at their door, they were not long in removing the wooden bar from behind it, and greeting the boy with the same cordiality as if he had been one of their own children.

Here our young hero was, for a while, in clover. Tanner-master Heinrich Lindemann was a person of no mean repute in the burgher-city of Eisenach: his father, Hans Lindemann, had been made a citizen (as the town records still show) at the beginning of the 15th century, and some

five years previous to the visit of Martin Luther, Heinrich Lindemann himself had been elected to fill the honourable office of *schöppe* (sheriff) of the city ; an office, moreover, which he had filled with so much satisfaction to the citizens that he had hopes of being shortly re-elected. Nor were those hopes groundless, for we find by the before-mentioned town chronicles, that in the years 1501 and 1507 the like dignity was conferred upon him. To be even a burgher of Eisenach, in those days, was a matter of no slight pride among those who had been admitted to the freedom of the city, and in the wars with the Emperor Henry IV. of Germany, many nobles and princes had taken refuge within the walls of that rampart-girt town.

Martin was invited to spend a few days' holidays in the tanner's family before entering upon his school duties. Heinrich Lindemann wished to let the boy see something of their grand town, previous to his joining the Franciscans, and good-naturedly proposed to make it a feast-day on the morrow, so that he might take the lad a walk and show him some of the principal sights of the neighbourhood.

Accordingly, little Martin and his uncle Heinrich were off early on the morrow to the "Pointed Prediger-berg"



Martin Luther and his Uncle—The Talk on the Hill.

(Preachers' Hill), whence the entire length and breadth of the town could be seen, cradled amid the green mountains of Thuringia, at one single glance. And there, while seated on the grass, and embowered among the foliage of woods, they ate their morning meal of bread and sausage as the Tanner-master, Heinrich Lindemann, pointed with his clasp-knife, while directing the boy's attention to the principal objects in the town, the buildings of which lay grouped together at their feet, as if they were the houses from a child's box of toys arranged upon a table.

"I did think our city of Mansfeld beautiful," said Martin; "but, in sooth, it be not half so fair a sight as this to me, uncle. Why, the rampart-wall that doth bind in the town, seemeth like to a long oval fold about the city."

"Ay," chimed in Heinrich Lindemann, "and the rampart-towers, ranged along the walls, do always look to me as if they were the castle-pieces set out on a chess-board."

"What a many there be, uncle," exclaimed the lad; "the place be but one mass of steeples and turrets. It be mighty strong, I warrant."

"So strong, my son," the Master-tanner answered proudly, "that many a Prince and Margrave hath sought

safety here. Yonder, at the far end there, Martin, be the Nicolai Church, and its nun-cloister, which be one of the richest in these parts, for the Archbishops were wont to give grace-grants to all who did make a visit and a gift to it. Here, in the days of old, Reinsweig,* one of the Queens of England sought for solace in her widowhood, and said prayers, day and night, for the release of her husband's soul that was in purgatory in the Hörschelsberg."

"Soh!" exclaimed the lad in the half stupor of his wonderment, and as he gazed in admiration at the tall Byzantine tower of the Church the innocent boy little thought that within the walls of that edifice the first evangelical sermon was destined to be preached,—and that in a few years,—owing to the words of fire that were to burst forth shortly, like a pent-up volcano-torrent, from his own lips.

"Yon church, with the three towers," continued Heinrich Lindemann, "and its wonder-fine cloister hard by be the Blessed Virgin's Church (*Liebfrauen oder Marien*

* Unfortunately for the Thuringian tradition, Englishmen are not cognizant that any lady of the name above mentioned was ever married to any of the English monarchs—more especially to those reigning between the time of the founding of the monastery, in 1036, and its suppression in the middle of the 16th century; an interval which includes the reigns from Harold I. to Queen Elizabeth.

Kirche).* It standeth over against the Knight's Lane (*Ritter-gasse*), on the hill there, and hath a mill for the grinding of meal belonging to the cloister. Thou canst just catch its water-wheel twinkling in the light there—dost see?—where the pond shineth, like unto a mirror.”

“Oh, I see!” cried the delighted lad; “why, uncle, it be one of the grandest churches in all the town.”

“That is righteous, boy,” proceeded the tanner; “it hath no less than twenty altars, and many vicars to give glory to it; and it was at that church that the good Elizabeth, wife of Ludswig IV., the Landgrave of Thuringia, did behold, on coming to the mass decked out in all her robes, a picture of Christ with his crown of thorns upon his head, whereupon the pious Landgravine did snatch the jewelled diadem from her brow, saying, ‘It ill becometh me to wear these garish stones in sight of such a bitter head-wreath as that.’”

“Did she, though?” inquired Martin, in half incredulous admiration of the act, “then the holy Elizabeth did dwell hereabouts, I suppose.”

“Ay, youngster,” was the reply; “the great castle of

* This church was destroyed in the peasant's year 1525, and now nothing but the mill-pond connected with the cloister remains to be seen.

Wartburg, crowning the hill-top at thy back, was the home of the good, kind soul : and at the foot of the cattle-hill, Martin, thou'lt see a spital, built by the holy Landgravine at the time of the great famine here, upwards of two hundred years ago ;* for the sick were too feeble then to mount the steep hill to be fed at the castle-gates by the pious princess's own hands. She was but twenty-four when she died, boy. So the good soul founded the spital at the foot of the mountain to lighten the toil of the poor things."

"Bless her !" said Martin.

"There be a rock-spring of sweet water hard by there, boy," continued the tanner ; "thou'lt see it anon in thy walks, and there the pious young sovereign was wont, it be said, to wash the clothes of the ailing ones ; whilst out by the Frauen-gate yonder," he added, pointing to the southern extremity of the town, "thou'lt find a stone

* This hospital received twenty-eight inmates, and was built with a circular wall about it. In the old painting of the town, as it formerly stood, this building has the appearance of a tiny chapel set in the middle of a large circus. In 1539, the Prince-Elector made use of the stones and tiles of this building as well as the chapel which had been added to it by Landgrave Friedrich the Grave, in 1313, for the reparation of the Castle of the Wartburg, so that now no trace of it, except the so-called Elizabethan Well remains to be seen.

which the indignant citizens did have set up to mark the spot where an old beldame, whom the holy Elizabeth had befriended many a tide and oft, did push the good Landgravine into the mire, after the hard-hearted Regent, Heinrich Raspe, had driven the young widow from the Wartburg, as soon as her husband, the Landgraf Ludwig IV., was no more."

"I wonder me that anyone, let alone the Landgrave, could harm so kind a creature," was the simple remark of the youth.

"It was thus, my son: the Christly young thing," explained the other, "loathed the silly pomps of the world, loving to clothe herself always in plain and humble garments, and ever wearing a hair-shirt next her fair and tender skin. The fine lords, of course, were angered at this; for it was only through love for her husband that she could ever be got to put on the robes of state, and then, as thou hast seen, she was ever ready to pull the diadem from her brow, and bow her head to any poor sorrowing soul.

"But let us finish with the city, first."

"What be that yonder in the middle of the town?" the youth inquired, as he pointed to a square-steepled tower, with a battlement-like pinnacle at each of its four corners,

The master tanner replied, "Oh! that be the church dedicated to St. George, the patron saint of our town."

"And he be the patron saint of Mansfeld, too," chimed in the boy. "Do you know, uncle, that Mansfelder folk do say that it was at Lunerberg, near to us, where St. George did kill the dragon."

"And here they declare," laughed the uncle, "the saint did slay the beast in the wilds of Thuringia;" and then, resuming the subject in hand, he continued,—

"The buildings behind the St. George's church be those of the school to which thou art bound, lad; and that long chapel-like edifice, facing the *Jörgen's Kirche*, is the cloister of the bare-footed friars, called the Franciscans—and they be the teachers that thou wilt have to follow, boy, for some time to come."

Young Martin shuddered as the recollection of his twelve months' suffering with the Augustiners passed through his mind. But he was among friends now, he thought the moment after, and so he gazed on at the pretty valley-city, and with far different eyes from what he had ever looked upon the huge incompassable town of Magdeburg.

"There at the back of the Franciscan cloister," went on Heinrich Lindemann, "is the God's-acre of the monks,

ranged just under the city walls—dost see?—by the hill there—which we called the Priests’-hill; ay, and it be sad to hear,” added Martin’s companion gravely, “that big bell of St. George’s Church boom over the city whenever another soul be on its way to its last home; there——”

“Is the church-bell here as big as the one at Eisleben, uncle?” inquired the boy.

“I cannot say yea or nay, lad,” was the reply; “but it be a mighty fine new work, and was set up in the church-tower here but one year after thy birth, Martin, and with these words stamped on the everlasting metal of which it was made:—

“ ‘With Margaretha’s name they crowned me,

‘In St. George’s Church they sound me,

‘And Stephen Hoffmann he did found me—1484.’

“But, uncle, the grand buildings of the town,” went on the boy, “seem to be gathered round about the *Jörgen’s Kirche*.”

“Yea, so they be,” was the answer. “On one side thou seest the *Residenz-haus* of the Thuringian Landgraves, with the toll-house at the back; and facing this is the merchant’s house (*Kaup-haus*), while between the two lieth the Rath-haus and the city cellars, where the finest beer of the town be ever stored,” and as the tanner men-

tioned each particular building, he pointed with his knife in the direction in which it lay.

"And how callest thou, uncle," inquired young Luther, "the gate at the end of the town nearest to us?"

"Oh, that be the George's-gate, leading to the Frankfort-road," ran the reply; "and the steeples close beside it be those of the holy Anna's cloister and spital; indeed, I can hardly sum up to thee all the monkeries and holy houses that be scattered through the town. That long building with the little belfry-like pinnacle on top of it, between the St. George's Church and St. George's-gate, be the cloister of the Dominican friars; and along the front of it, couldst thou but see it from here, thou wouldst find a row of prisons, for the Dominicans have the right of the Inquisition, and love to lock up, for their lives, all whom they suspect of doubting the teachings of the Church."

"But I have heard mother say, uncle," interposed Martin, "that it be better to still an unruly tongue at any cost, lest idle babblings should set others off babbling to the same tune."

"Thy mother, boy, and my sister, was ever a zealot in Faith," said the uncle; "but in this same town of Eisenach there be many ready to laugh at the fables and tricks of

the priests, and even the more honest of the monks themselves have scarce a good word to say of the doings of their brothers."

"Shame on them for it, I say," exclaimed the earnest lad; "why, the best man I ever knew was Father Andreas Proles, and he was a monk, uncle, and head of the Augustine begging-friars at Magdeburg."

"Mayhap, boy," was the cold rejoinder; "but do thou speak with Johannes Hilten, the Franciscan monk here, as I have done, and hear him tell thee of the sins and show-holiness of his brother friars, and then thou wilt have but little worship left for the lying, guzzling, and begging louts. Though, mark my word," added the tanner, "an that same Johannes Hilten doth not put a bridle on his tongue, he'll come to end his days in the torture-cages of the Dominican kloister yonder. But I do forget me; I did bring thee hither, Martin, to show thee the beauties of our town, and not to rave about what be the pest of it.

"Look there, how many fine gates we have: lo, there is the Nicolai-gate, then comes the Krimmel-gate, then the Frauen-gate, the Prediger-gate, Preachers' Monk-gate, the George's-gate, and the Nadel-gate. Was ever prince's palace set with so many open doors to receive the wanderers? Then the spital or houses for the poor! why they be

as many here as the churches that do teach our citizens charity to those whom God hath favoured less than themselves. Now, look around, lad, upon our hills," cried the burgher of Eisenach as he warmed over the glories of his native city, "and scarce a mountain summit you see but is crowned by the stronghold of some noble duke or prince. There behind us frowns the fastness of the Wartburg, with the castle of the Madel-stein on another hill-top on one side of it, and that of the Eisenach-stein, capping a third mountain on the other ; and though each be a fortress in itself, yet neither hath power sufficient to enable its lord to force his way within our city gates, an it please the citizens to cut off the grace of allowing him to enter."

"In truth, uncle," said Martin, "this Eisenach be as fair a place as any I have seen, and I know not whence came the thoughts ; but as I hear thee speak, and look upon the city, now basking in the sun, with the green hills swelling like a sea all round about it, the town seemeth to me like to the ark in the deluge, and as if some dove were hovering near—like to that wood-pigeon yonder—with a branch in its mouth as an assurance that the strife and struggle of man's disbelief are drawing to an end, and that a sweet halcyon peace of spiritual freedom is nigh at hand."

"What can put such thoughts in thy head, boy?" said the uncle, starting at the earnestness and wild manner with which the youth had spoken.

"I know not, uncle; I spoke like one in a dream," was the simple response; "the sight of this pretty valley-city spread out at my feet did put strange, wild thoughts into my head. I am given to such wanderings, I should tell thee. But when first I did look upon it, I did feel—I cannot tell thee why or wherefore—as if my fate in life were linked up with these same city walls, and that I should live to hail it one day as 'Dear, beloved Eisenach!'"

"What ails thee, lad?" asked the tanner, tenderly, but anxiously.

"Nothing, uncle, nothing!" ran the vague reply. "I feel as if a happy dream had come over me; for when thou didst turn me round to look at the towers of the Wartburg yonder, on the hill, it did seem to me as if I had seen it over and over again before. Thou hast had the self-same feeling, uncle, many a time, I doubt not," he added, parenthetically; "and dost thou know, uncle, as I looked at it I couldn't help thinking, somehow or other, that it was *my home*, though what could have put such silly fancies into my head I cannot tell thee. But we do

ringian lords for accommodation whenever they passed the night in the city. Paulinus tells us that this Franciscan church was built in the thirteenth century, and that the monastery adjoining it stretched along the town walls, from the spot known as the "Parsonage Hill," to the height that was afterwards christened the "Charlottenberg"—after the wife of Wilhelm IV., the duke at the time of beautification of the pleasure garden into which the old Franciscan cemetery had some years previously been converted.

The tradition among the people of Eisenach is, that young Luther's schoolhouse was situate where the palace brewery (*Schloss-brauerei*) now stands ; and we ourselves, when but strangers in the town, were conducted to one of the malting floors in that establishment, and assured that this was the precise spot where Martin had been taught by the learned Rector Trebonius. Prolonged examination, however, soon convinced us that the tradition was unfounded ; and a cursory search of the town-chronicles taught us that, though Martin was in Eisenach at the close of the fifteenth century, this same building was not erected until the end of the sixteenth year-hundred ; for when the *Landgrafen-hof* was enlarged by Duke Johann Ernst the elder, the school that had formerly been held

in the church of the "Bare-feet" or Franciscans was for the first time removed, and established upon the spot where the palace-brewery now stands.*

Nor can there be any doubt as to the exact locality of the old Franciscan Church and the school appertaining to it; for the same authority as enables us to detect the fallacy of the city-tradition, describes moreover the precise situation of the old seminary itself. "The school," says the chronicler, "at the time when Martin Luther frequented it, had its situation next to the *Herren* or *Landgrafen-höfe*, where the palace-tower of the *Residenz-haus* exists to this day.†

Unfortunately, this interesting Franciscan school was pulled down in 1597, as we have said, when Duke Johann Ernst extended the Landgrafen-hof, and built himself a new wing at the western end of the old Residenz-haus, out of the stones of the demolished church and cloister, at the same time as he converted the Franciscan burial-

* The words of the historian are, "*Im 16ten Jahr-hundert wurde der Landgrafen-hof erweitert und die Schule wurde mit dazu gezogen worauf sie ihren Platz da, wo jetzt das Schlossbrauhaus steht, erhalten hat.*"

† *Die Schule hatte, damals, ihren Standort bei dem Herren-oder Landgrafenhöfe, wo jetzt der Schlossthurm des Residenz-hauses ist.*—
HIST. BESCHREIBUNG DER STADT EISENACH.

ground into the first pleasure-garden in connexion with the palace—the St. George's School being then, and not until *then*, removed, we repeat, to the site which is now occupied by the palace-brewery.*

In connexion with this same old Franciscan institution, whither Martin was bound, was the "*currend school*," at which the choir-boys were taught, not only singing, so as to be able to take part in the church service, but educated by the monks in the classics and other forms of learning, with the view of fitting them either to become priests or teachers.

To this day the same kind of choral academy exists in

* The present ducal palace stands on the northern side of the market-place, nearly facing the old Residenz-haus, and occupying the site of the ancient merchants' house or exchange (*Kaufhaus*). This new palace was built by the Duke Ernst Augustin 1741, at which time the old Kaufhaus had been converted into no less than three beer-houses and two dwellings at the back. The reason of the change of residence on the part of the duke is said to have arisen from the fact that the widow of Duke Wilhelm Heinrich had destroyed all the tapestry and defaced the walls of the chambers of the old palatial dwelling. When the present palace was first built, it had a clock that struck the hours with a set of bells, under the cupola on the roof, that were arranged so as to play a chime at regular intervals. The clock and bells, however, no longer exist; and the old "*Residenz-haus*" is now converted into a soup-kitchen for the poor, instituted by the late Duchess of Orleans.

connexion with the city or burger-school of Eisenach. For as the scholars of the St. George's School increased greatly in number after the Reformation, the then new seminary was removed from the building, which has since been converted into the palace-brewhouse, to the Dominican or preacher's cloister, where, at the beginning of the last century, it was formed into a "*gymnasium*," and where it still remains.

On the removal of the St. George's School to its present quarters, the "currend" or choral part of the institution was transferred thither also, and it continued to be connected with that establishment until the year 1836, when the superintendence of it was handed over to the directors of the "*bürgers' schule*," under whose charge it continues to the present day.

There are at present some sixty scholars in connexion with this part of the burgers' school, thirty of whom are from fifteen to twenty years old, and the remainder considerably younger, their ages varying from twelve to ten or even lower. One half of these boys—or fifteen of the elder and fifteen of the younger ones—sing hymns and chorals every other Sunday (though formerly it was customary for the youths to do so twice or even thrice in each week) between the hours of five and six in the morning,

winter and summer, snow or wind—heavy rain-falls alone preventing them—outside the principal houses, and often along the streets of the town. One moiety of the older and younger boys, with a director at their head, take one half of the town one Sunday, and the other moiety the other half on the following Sabbath. These lads form part of the choir-singers at the two principal churches—a certain portion of them singing at the St. George's Church, in the "Wednesday's market-place," and the other at the Nicolai Kirche, in the "Saturday's market-place." They are chosen from the scholars of the several academic institutions in the city, on account of their melodious voices, and are taught singing for two or three years before becoming connected with the choir. The houses outside which they chant are said to be generally the same as they were in Martin Luther's time, and these consist mostly of the larger dwellings, in which the wealthier burghers of old may be supposed to have resided, as well as the majority of the *bakers' shops* distributed throughout the town. The singers come provided with the scores of the different parts of the hymns they are to sing, and as soon as it grows light, they make use of these as guides to the general harmony—the lads, as they halt and prepare to sing, grouping themselves around the director, who first

strikes the key-note with the tuning-fork he holds in his hand, and then proceeds to regulate the time and modulation of the choral.

As soon as Divine service is over, the younger portion of the singers assemble in the Wednesday's market-place, under the burgers' school, with their "*currends*" (or little money-boxes) in their hands. These currends, from which the institution derives its distinctive name, consist of small circular boxes, made of tin, about as big as a child's mug, with a slit at the top, a padlock in front, and handle at the back. They are painted brown, and are still of the same form as they were in the time of Martin Luther, whose currend-box may be seen preserved to this day in the Luther chamber at the Wartburg.

When the whole of the little fellows deputed to collect the donations have come together, they file off in couples—each pair of boys soliciting alms in different districts of the quarter in which they have collectively chanted that morning. It is customary for the citizens at whose houses the boys sing regularly, to pay ten groschens (or one shilling English) every quarter towards the institution ; so that the youngsters beg only at the houses of the non-subscribers in the locality which forms part of their beat. Upon reaching these houses, the little lads open the doors

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or enter the open shops, and then, with their money-box held forth in their hands, they cry aloud, in a peculiar drone, with a prolonged emphasis upon the first syllable of the word—"Co-o-or-end!" while they jingle their coins in their little tin boxes, to remind the people of the object of their visit. Their usual reward is more or less "*pfennige*" (twelve of which make an English penny), according to the amount of liberality, or small-change, possessed by the donor at the time.

The money thus collected is divided among the scholars every quarter of a year, and goes to find them either in clothes, or such other articles as they may require; the only drawback being, that those boys who have failed to assemble at the appointed time and place on the Sunday morning, have to forfeit one groschen (about a penny) out of the share coming to them for each day they have been absent.

In the olden time it was usual for each of the currend-boys to be provided with a mantle similar in shape to that of the Catholic "*Chor Rock*," but of a thick material; for we find in the historical account of Eisenach that the choir-singers sang every Wednesday and Saturday forenoon, before the people's houses, *each being alike clad in a blue cloth mantle* ("*Sammtlich mit einem blauen Tuch-*

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mantel bekleidet.") These mantles, however, were discarded for many years, for it was not until the boys were supplied with cloaks through the liberality of one of the principal manufacturers of the town, that the currend-scholars made their appearance in their ancient garb, though the mantles now worn are of a black, rather than the ordained blue colour. The days for singing in the streets, moreover, have been changed, the chanting being restricted now to once in the week, instead of twice, while the periods of collection continue to be *bi-weekly* as of old.

At the period of Martin Luther's first visit to Eisenach the winter had hardly died out. It was Easter-tide when the boy first quitted Mansfeld for Magdeburg, and he had stayed just upon a twelvemonth in the Augustine monastery there ; so that when he reached the renowned Thuringian city, the woods were all bare, or red with the dried, rusty-looking oak leaves still clinging to the boughs, and the snow-bells were only just beginning to peep through the stunted grass of the meadows ; the deer had ceased coming down from the forests to the neighbouring villages, in quest of food, and the red-brown rocks of the *Frauen-thal* and *Gehauene-stein-thal*, that had no longer huge stalactites of ice pendant from their edges ; the night-

ingale had not yet been heard in the woods about the town, and the swallows' nests that were built under the eaves of the old houses were still untenanted. The fields and the hill-sides were all brown as umber, and speckled over with the dappled oxen-team that were busy from morn till sun-down turning up the soil ; while on certain days of the week the poorer part of the towns-folk were to be seen streaming in through the gates, bending beneath the heavy bundle of dried twigs and branches which they carried on their backs, and which they were allowed to *break*, but not to cut, from the forest trees for the feeding of their scanty fires. The Hörschel, the Nässe, and the mill-ditches were swollen, and ruddy as the old sandstone of the neighbouring mountains, with the heavy floods that had set in on the breaking up of the winter. The peasants' wagons had been taken off their sledging-timbers (*schlitten-kufe*), and once more came to the markets upon wheels ; the house-wives were busy removing the straw mats from before the greater number of the casements, or stripping the rolls of moss from the cracks of the window-frames ; and little boys, with a basket slung in front of them, wandered about from street to street, ringing their hand-bells to announce to those in the beer-house that the salted "Lent-breads" were close at hand ; while the old grey-

bearded peasant was heard crying in the narrow lanes, "*Kauf Kalmus! kalmus kauf!*" ("Buy my sweet-flag,") the stalks of which were used for flavouring the corn-brandy-wine that was to be kept as stock for the year.

Though the days were occasionally sunny and warm so long as the sun-shine lasted, the nights were still stingingly bleak; and often in the morning the fields were dusted all over with the white glittering powder of the hoar frost, while from the plants beside the brooks outside the town there hung long icicles like a fringe of crystal-glass about the stems and leaves.

Such a morning was it, most probably, when little Martin commenced his life as a currend-boy in the St. George's school of Eisenach. There was not a gleam of daylight when the bell of the Franciscan cloister summoned the choir-boys to rise for their morning's rounds about the town. The moon was shining in the clear sky, bright as a silver shield, and the stars twinkled in the cold, ashy, grey air as if they were so many little winged "*Johannis worms*" (Thuringian fire-flies) floating in the dusk.

As the boy sprang from the litter that served him for a bed, and tried to look out of the casement, he had to scrape through the thin sheet of frosted flower-work covering

the rude, round panes that were like the ends of so many bottles set in the window-frame. The little fellow shuddered as he felt how sharp the air was, and saw through the scratch he had made in the ice upon the window-glass, the moon-beams shining on the house-tops, as white as a sheet of snow. But there was no time to hesitate, for he could hear the other singers go clattering down the cloister stairs ; so he hurried on his clothes, and proceeded to join the rest, who were assembling in front of the church outside.

The lads whose duty it was to sing through the town that Sabbath morning, were soon mustered by the Cantor, and then away they shuffled in a throng, one after the other, and each with his blue cloth cloak drawn tightly around him ; while some shivered, others yawned, and others rubbed their sleepy eyes on their first entry into the streets of the still and desolate city.

The house of John Trebonius, the learned Rector of the St. George's-school, was the first visited. This stood on the little bit of rising ground known as the "Pastor's-hill" (now called the *Pfarr-berg*), and close against what was then and is still styled the "*Holy-house*," which was at that time the prayer and offering-house of the Franciscan brotherhood, and was stored, not only with relics, but



The Early Morning Chant at Eisenach.



with all kinds of holy images ; and thither people came to pray and make gifts, even down to a halfpenny, to save their souls "from the regions of fire and brimstone,"—to use the words of the old chroniclers. This building was directly facing the Franciscan monastery ; and immediately adjoining it lived, as we have said, John Trebonius, the Rector of the Franciscan or St. George's-school.

Here the singers grouped themselves in a circle about the Cantor, and, after the key-note had been pitched, burst forth into one loud chant that, in the stillness of the darkness, made the streets echo again and again with the solemn sounds.

"'Tis morn !" sang one, in a fine, deep bass voice.

"'Tis morn !" echoed another, with the exquisite harmony of a tenor.

"'Tis morn !" chanted a third, taking up the strain.

And then they all sang together, as if with one voice :

"'Tis morn ! and we here ere the sun

To tell another week hath run ;

Another week is quickly passed,

Who knows which week shall be the last.

We're in thy hands, O Lord."

At this point the casement of the house outside which they were singing was opened, and one of the inmates,

who was huddled up in a thick rug, leant with his arms upon the sill, to listen to what followed.

"The birds," then trilled forth one of the younger boys, in a fine melodious treble.

"The birds," repeated another, still younger, and whose voice was even shriller than the first.

"The birds," chimed in a third, holding the note till the others all took up the strain in different parts, and chanted simultaneously—

"The birds are not yet on the wing;
Our matin lay, ere they, we sing.
A prayer for thee, a prayer for thine,
Ere yet the eastern sunbeams shine,
We breathe to God the Lord!"

As the youths sang out the words in the tomblike silence of the sleeping city, the music of their finely-blent voices floated in exquisitely delicious gusts of harmony upon the fresh morning breeze. Not another sound was to be heard; not a light to be seen, and the tall, colourless forms of the church-steeple and the city-towers stood out against the cold, grey background of the starry sky with a half spectral air.

Music on the water hath ever a special charm of sweetness about it. Again, what so touching, too, as music over

a grave, with the sense that the ears in the tomb below are deaf to all earthly sounds. But music in the dead of the night surpasses all; for it has then something of an unearthly character about it; not alone because the singers are unseen, or because the contrasted stillness of all around gives a double richness and sweetness to the sounds; but because the senses are at such a time half entranced in slumber, and the mind ready to indulge in the wildest internal fancies on the least external promptings. What wonder, then, that the sweet voices of that boy-choir, commingling as they did, till the warbling of the many throats sounded like the pealing of one single organ in the distance, should have stirred the soul of all who listened with thoughts of the choicest, tenderest, and gravest beauty; for indeed it wanted but little imagination, at such an hour and in such a superstitious age, to believe that the invisible boy-singers in the darkness, as their chant filled the air above and all around, were some ghostly angelic choir, waking up the creatures of the earth from the worldly trance that was upon them.

The chant was no sooner ended, than the figure at the little window above cried out, "Thank ye, my children;" after which the choral throng went shivering off again down the little hill and across the open St. George's

Place to the tri-gabled old "*Herren-haus*," part of which was then appropriated to the residence of the principal city-magistrates or "*consules*," as they were then called,—a title which in later times was changed into that of burgomaster. Here dwelt the worshipful Hans Munck and Hans Müller, the mayors of Eisenach for that year, and here, as a mark of honour, two of the city fantasins stood outside the round, arched gateway below; these, with the exception of some stray priest, with a lantern in his hand, who was hastening to administer the last sacrament of extreme unction to some poor dying soul, where the light was seen gilding the panes of the one house in the general darkness—these, we say, besides the boy taking down the shutters at the early schnapps shop at the corner, were the only signs of life in the place.

Here another morning hymn was sung—the voices ringing through the open and deserted square, and sounding with such solemn intensity, that many of the citizens dwelling in the houses by the *Raths-keller*, at the corner, were roused from their slumbers; and window after window became burnished with the lights within.

The hymn ended, away the choir-scholars hurried again, off to the Goldsmith's Street, where dwelt the wealthier burghers of the town, and where, above the stone arch-

way to the big houses, the escutcheons and initials of the owners were sculptured on the key-stone. Here, too, the narrow street was made to reverberate again and again with the early chant, while the matin bell of the several churches kept tolling at every bar of the carol ; after which they bent their steps to the Butchers' Lane, passing, by the way, many an aged crone who went coughing along with her well-thumbed " missal " in her hand on the road to the early prayers.

By this time the air was blue with the coming light of day, the birds were twittering on the house-tops, and the white wood smoke curling from many a chimney, while the faint breeze, which usually springs up at sunrise, grew chillier and more searching than ever ; so that when the lad reached the shambles of the town they found the master butchers who dwelt there (for each trade in those days had its particular quarter to which it was restricted), busy unlocking the gratings before their open shops, and arranging the tubs of pickled-beef, or the little bits of fresh meat, or festoons of sausages upon the hooks within ; while each, as the troop of boys went by, drew the night-cap from his head and cried " Good morning " to them all. In this place, also, was the choral chanted—outside the house belonging to the master of the butchers' guild ;

while the greasy-garmented inhabitants of the quarter came and grouped themselves about the boys and stood, with uncovered heads and gaping mouths, listening to the stave.

Next they were off to the Frauen Street, and there the morning hymn was repeated in front of the little bakers' shops that had now the tiny tray of fresh-baked white breadlets slung outside the ground-floor window.

Again and again the hymn was sung in front of the little bread-stores, while the master-bakers stood at the doors with their bare feet, and their hair and eye-brows, white as thistle-down with the flour clinging to them, and their apprentices by their side, listening with wonderment to the carolling of the little sweet-throated throng.

After this the soap-boilers' quarter was visited, and then the bark-reeking neighbourhood of the tanneries, where Heinrich Lindemann was already at the window, smoking his long pipe, as he waited to listen to his little nephew's first performance with the current singers of the town.

At the conclusion of the hymn in this part of the town, the tanner nodded and smiled approvingly to Martin as off the troop hurried once more ; whereupon they wended their way to the Lower Lane (or *Untergasse*), where dwelt the master weavers and cloth-makers

of the city—the looms beside the windows there ceasing to clatter as the chant commenced—for it was customary then for all to work up to church-time. And when the choral had once more been given in the Knife-smiths'-street, the lads returned to the St. George's Place, and there, at the back of the Residenz-haus (which then formed part of the "Herren," or City Magistrate's house, as we have before said), they drew up in front of a large mansion remarkable for its carved stone gateway, with caryatic figures supporting the massive arch, and with huge, over-hanging floors, and high, many-storied roof.

This domicile was known, even in those days, as it is down to these, by the title of the "Cotta-house," for there dwelt three merchant-brothers of that name, Friedrich, Conrad, and Johann; and they were among the wealthiest, the most learned, and the most esteemed of the Eisenacher burgesses in young Martin Luther's time.

Johann, or Hans, Cotta the youngest of the three brothers, had already filled the office of City Consul, or Mayor, at three distinct periods, and had, moreover, been twice elected to serve as "*Schöppe*," or Sheriff. Indeed, so highly does the Cotta family appear to have been respected by the citizens of Eisenach, that from the middle of the 15th century, down to the end of the 16th,

the names of some one or other of the brothers, or their children, occur almost every other year, as having been chosen to fill the chief posts of dignity in the town. The name of Conrad alone is absent from the historical list of the consuls and scabeni of the period; but he is known to have been a member of the "*Raths-collegium*," as it was called—a body which is equivalent to the town councillors of the old English municipalities, and which institution the chronicles tell us was coeval with the building of the town itself.*

The grave-stone of Conrad Cotta is still to be seen standing against the southern wall of the Eisenach cemetery, close to that of his brother Johann, whose full-length figure is sculptured in his long fur-lined gown of office. The epitaph of Conrad is loud in the praise of his virtues, and tells us that he died in his 77th year, but the precise

* In the year 1300 this collegium was composed of 24 *stadt-räthen*, or *raths-herren*, as they were sometimes called. The members of this body, from the 12th to the beginning of the 15th century, being looked upon with such honour that they were styled the "*nobiles ministeriales*," the noble city ministers; and in the time of Landgraf Balthasar (A. D. 1381—1406) it was thought so enviable a dignity to be a member of the Eisenach Raths-collegium, that many of the burghers promised the citizens, if they were elected to the office, to contribute 300 "*shock-groschen*" yearly towards the payment of the town debts.

date of his death has been unfortunately effaced by the mouldering away of one corner of the stone. The genealogical tree of the Cottas, however, records the death of Conrad to have occurred in the year 1511, so that this member of the family—whose kindness, as well as that of his wife Ursula, to the poor little current scholar, Martin Luther, has become the most illustrious of all the Cottas, and conferred a finer patent of nobility upon the descendants of that race than that which was originally granted to their ancestors by the Emperor Sigismund,—this same good Master Conrad, we say, must have been born in the year 1494, and consequently have been some 63 years of age at the time when little Martin Luther first sang as a current-boy before his house, and afterwards begged of Dame Ursula at his door.*

* There are the same contradictory statements to be found in the works of the different Lutheran biographers, concerning the husband of Ursula Cotta, as there are concerning the number of Martin's brothers and sisters, or even the birth-place of the Frau Luther herself. Audin, who (with the exception of Jorgens) is, perhaps, the most precise of all the recent writers on the subject, speaks of Ursula as "*veuve d'un riche bourgeois.*" (*Hist. de la vie*, p. 6.) Michelet, on the other hand, changes Conrad Cotta into a gentleman of the name of *Hans Schweikard*, of whom he makes Ursula Cotta the widow; though, by what peculiar marital arrangement, the widow Cotta could ever have been the Frau Schweikard it is difficult

Of the age of the goodwife, Ursula herself, no records exist. The family pedigree shows, however, that Conrad and Ursula had two children, named Heinrich

to understand. "After a while," are M. Michelet's words, "Martin obtained a more regular subsistence, and an asylum in the house of Dame Ursula Cotta, widow of Hans Schweikard, who took compassion on the poor wandering boy." (*Life of Luther*, p. 5, *Bogue's Edition*.) Even the Chronicles of the town of Eisenach give equally unsatisfactory and conflicting accounts of Ursula Cotta, and the Cotta family in general. In the "Topographical and Historical Account of the City of Eisenach," by Johann Wilhelm Storch, we find at page 47 the following statement: "The Reformer, Doctor Martin Luther," says that author, "came to our currind-school at the end of the 15th century, and was a poor scholar here, as is well known, and a pious widow, named Cotta, had a mantle made for him on account of his agreeable voice." On the other hand, Christianus Paulinus, who was one of the earliest local writers, has the following passage in his "Historical Dissertation" upon the "ancient and noble family of the Cottas" concerning Conrad and Ursula his wife: "Illi fasces detulit patriæ ut officii memor consuleret, et cuique suum daret. Iste sapiens dictus ad idem consulatûs fastigium surrescit, anno MDXXV, uti Fridericus. CONRADUS ex URSULA Schallbia suscepit BONAVENTURAM II. consulem et mercatorem urbis primarium, ac HENRICUM II., etiam consulem, sed in cœlibatu extinctum."

Here, then, we have four distinct statements: (1) that of Audin, who describes Ursula Cotta as the *widow of a rich citizen*; (2) that of Herr Storch, the Eisenach historian, who speaks of her as a *pious widow*, who had a mantle made for Martin; (3) that of M. Michelet, according to whom she was the *widow of Hans Schweikard*; (4) that of Paulinus, the earliest local writer on the subject, who tells us that Conrad Cotta was made *consul of Eisenach* in the year

and Bonaventura, while the ancient catalogue of the persons forming the corporation of town-councillors in Eisenach, from the year 1247, bears an entry that Heinrich

1525. Upon searching the town register, however, we found that no member of the family was either mayor or sheriff of the city at the time named, and that in the year 1524 it was the brother, Johann Cotta, who filled the office instead of Conrad. Under these circumstances a letter was sent to the present descendant of the family living at Tarant, near Leipzig, and he very politely, in answer to the numerous queries put to him, forwarded to us a copy of the genealogical tree of the Cotta family, with the dates of birth and death of each member affixed, so far as they could be now ascertained. By the aid of this document we then discovered that neither was the Eisenach tradition true that Ursula was a widow at the time of Martin first coming to Eisenach in 1498, nor was there any foundation for the statement of Paulinus that her husband was chosen consul in the year 1525—and that for the very cogent reason that Conrad died in the year 1511, or in other words, he was alive thirteen years *after* Luther's first visit to the city, and dead fourteen years *before* the time he is said to have become burgomaster of Eisenach.

The inscription on Conrad Cotta's grave-stone in the Eisenach cemetery is to the following effect:—

“ I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER
LIVETH, AND THAT HE WILL HEREAFTER
WAKE ME OUT OF THE EARTH,
AND THAT HE WILL THEREUPON
ENCOMPASS ME WITH THIS MY SKIN,
SO THAT I SHALL SEE GOD IN THE FLESH,
AND I SHALL SEE HIM IN THE SPIRIT TOO,
AND MY EYES SHALL BEHOLD HIM
AS NO STRANGER.”

Cotta died in the year 1565, adding, "that he was a well-to-do man, a great patron of learning, and that he studied at Wittenberg, where he was for five years the table com-

Around this central inscription the following lines are sculptured :

" CONRAD COTTA IN GOD THE LORD

SLEEPS IN THE 77TH YEAR OF HIS AGE—

— — JÖRGENS PLAN."

The first of the last three lines is cut at the top of the stone; the second extends down the right hand side of it, the termination being effaced; and the two words which compose the third line are all that can now be made out of the inscription that once stood on the left hand side of the tomb. Immediately above the writing are two escutcheons, one on either side, with the head of a cherub sculptured in relief in the centre. The escutcheon on the left hand is that of the Cotta family, and that of the Luthers, i. e. three roses and a half cross-bow appears on the right; while the head of the cherub in the middle bears a curiously-strong resemblance to Martin Luther himself, the neck being oddly enough swathed in a clerical cravat, such as Martin is seen to wear in the portrait of him by Lucas Cranach.

Of the family of Ursula Cotta, on the other hand, it is known, from the historical dissertation of Paulinus, concerning what he styles the "*antiquâ et nobile familiâ Cottarum*," that Conrad Cotta was wedded to one Ursula Schalbe, who, according to Lingk's "Travels connected with the History of Luther," was the daughter of the mayor of Ilfeld. In the Eisenach town-registries, however, the name of Hans or Johann Schalbe is found recorded as being several times consul of the city between the years 1454 and 1475, while that of Heinrich Schalbe appears associated with the same office in 1495 and 1503; so that, as citizens in those days seldom travelled far from their own homes in quest of wives, and the people of Eisenach to this day have continued to intermarry so

panion (*Tisch-bursch*) of Martin Luther;" so that, as the tradition runs that Heinrich Cotta was some few years younger than Luther himself when Martin was received into the wealthy burgher's family, we may, without going very wide of the mark, assume that he was born somewhere about the year 1490, and consequently that he was about seven or eight years old when he became the playmate of our hero, and that his mother at the same period had seen some fifty summers, more or less.


Such, then, was the family that dwelt in the large house upon the St. George's Place, outside which Martin Luther and his brother choir-scholars were about to repeat

uniformly with their own townfolk, that almost every other person whom a true Eisenacher meets in his walks through the streets is either a first, second, or third cousin to him, and the cries of "*Guten tag, vetter*" (Good day, cousin), resound at every moment on every side—such customs render it far more likely that Conrad Cotta should have been wedded to the daughter of the Schalbe family, who were the mayors of Eisenach, than have gone all the way to Ilfeld to seek a burgomaster's daughter of the same name.

We shall take it for granted, therefore, on the want of more direct evidence, that the good Dame Ursula was a native of the Thuringian city, and that the Heinrich Schalbe who had been the burgomaster of the town three years before Martin first visited the place, was her own brother, and that Hans Schalbe, who had filled the same office thrice between the years 1461—1475, was her father, and that he was dead at the period to which this part of our story refers.

their matin chant—a chant with which the new current-scholar's future lot in life was so intimately connected, that we, who look back upon the event through the long vista of nearly four hundred years, can but wonder what would have been the fate of the poor penniless and almost friendless lad—and what other spirit would have been left to have fought the hard fight of the battle of the Reformation—had not the lucky gift of his fine melodious voice touched the heart of the tender Ursula Cotta; or how the destitute boy would possibly have lived, when his uncle, Heinrich Lindemann, had ceased to welcome him at his board, had not Ursula and Conrad been ready to open their doors to the outcast, and to tend and foster him as dearly as if he had been a child of their own.

Those who see the world as something more than a mere “fortuitous concourse of atoms,” and believe that the forces which are for ever at work around us are but the immutable expressions of the Almighty's will, surely must discern the finger of God in such portentous “accidents” as these—accidents which consist in the mere chanting of a hymn in a touching tone by one who was but little better than a poor beggar-boy singing in the street, and which yet are made to lead, not only to the downfall of the most despotic tyranny that ever enthralled



mankind, but to give birth to a new creed—that great creed of self-reliance and self-assertion (for the “Gospel freedom” established by Luther was but the forerunner of the grand system of mental freedom propounded by Bacon) which has done more for the enlightenment and progress of mankind than ages of mere scholastic dogmatism *had* or ever *could have* compassed.

From this time forth Martin’s boyhood was but one long chapter of such accidents, while each of the so-called “fortuitous” links in the chain bore, each and all, alike towards one simple end—an end, moreover, that his father was sworn to prevent, viz. his entering into holy orders, and which event was neither more nor less than the pivot upon which his whole after life was made to hinge.

Now, if a barrel of gunpowder were to be found hidden in a cellar, with a train laid from it to a point far away, and at the end of that train a match-box, in readiness to fire the whole, why surely any common jury, made up of the commonest minds in the country, would not hesitate for a minute to regard such a collocation of circumstances, all tending towards one particular result, as an act of *design* on the part of some person unknown.

To us the same *design* is apparent in every little incident in the early life of Martin Luther.

But we shall see.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAME URSULA COTTA TAKES PITY ON LITTLE MARTIN.

THE sun was now just trembling above the square tower of the Nicolai gate, and the long shadow of the little turret on top of the "Raths-keller" (the beer-house called the Town-Councillors' cellar), at the corner of the market-place, stretched far across the open space; while the large dragon-shaped gurgails that projected far out from the eaves of the old-fashioned houses began to drip with the thawing of the hoar frost on the roofs. The streets were astir with the donkeys laden with the huge tin milk-jugs that were shaped like old Etruscan beakers, and the serving-girls were out at the St. George's fountain, grouped around the large gilt statue of the patron saint of the town, some with their great wooden water-tubs, that were like gigantic quivers, strapped to their back, and others with them resting on the coping-stone of the fountain, as they waited and gossiped till it came to their turn to have them filled.

"Still!" cried one of the maids, as she tried to silence

the clatter of voices about the *brunnen*; "there be the currend-scholars with their pretty morning song. Be still, I say!" and immediately afterwards all the folk about the market-place had uncovered their heads, while the more simple of the girls knelt down in front of the gilt image of the patron saint, as the following hymn came floating through the air:—

"Hark! hark!" sang two of the youngest among the choir.

"Hark! hark!" two of the elder choristers repeated; and immediately all the others chanted together—

"Hark! hark! 'tis now the sabbath morn;

The seventh day this hour is born."

"Sing, sing," cried the two youngsters.

"Sing, sing," echoed the two elder ones, as before; and then the whole choir responded with—

"Sing, sing a hymn that swells to Heaven;

This day's the best of all the seven."

"Up wake!" chanted one alone.

"Up wake!" warbled another, in a still higher key; and then one and all poured forth the strain in chorus—

"Up wake! up wake, and hear our lay!

This is the blessed Sabbath day."

Before the first verse had ended, Ursula Cotta was at

the window, bearing in her arms her little son Heinrich, whom it was plain, from the long, loose flannel gown in which he was clad, and the rough and tufted state of his golden locks, she had but that moment dragged from his bed; and then, placing the little fellow with his bare feet to stand on the window ledge, the mother held up her forefinger to the sleepy child, to bid him stop crying; and immediately afterwards pointed down into the street below, to show him that the current singers, whom he and she loved so dearly to hear, were grouped about their door, and preparing to sing afresh.

"Hush!" then sang Martin Luther by himself, in a soft voice.

"Hush!" warbled another, in the same subdued tone; whereupon the whole choir chanted in a half-whisper—

"Hush! 'tis the dawn of peace and rest;
The day which the Almighty bless'd."

Again Martin carolled forth alone—

"Such peace we ask for all within."

To which the chorus responded solemnly,—

"Forgiveness for thine every sin."

"Rest on, rest on," Martin again chanted singly; and before he had finished the words, the others chimed in, in an undertone, with—

“Rest on, rest on; no worldly woe.

Should the sweet Sabbath morning know.”

At the conclusion of the chant, the delighted little Heinrich clapped his hands and chuckled again with joy; while his mother looked down and nodded her head rapidly to the boys, her face beaming with smiles the while, in token of her approbation.

Some few hours after this, when mass in the various churches was over, Martin and the younger choir-scholars assembled on the hill by the “Holy-house,” and having had their currend-boxes handed to them by the Rector, away they went in couples to collect what they could for the support of themselves and their brother choristers at the school.

The first place Martin and his brother currender visited was the beer-house called the *Raths-keller*, situate at the corner of the market-place. No sooner was his hand upon the string that pulled the latch to the drinking-room door, than his little companion’s heart failed him, and he twitched Martin by the cloak, as the latter was about to push the portal before him. .

“Thou hadst better not show thy face in there, I tell thee; they be mostly town-councillors within, and bear the

Barefooted Brothers no love. Thou'lt get more jibes than pfennige from them, Martin."

But Martin had been too long schooled among the begging friars at Magdeburg to be as faint-hearted as the lad who accompanied him, and who was a comparative novice at the business ; so breaking away from the clutch of the other, he dashed abruptly into the room.

True enough the chamber was filled as close as it could pack with the *Raths-herren* and burgesses of the town, who had come there as usual to eat their "ten o'clock meal," which consisted, for the most part, of a "*bückling*" (a red herring) and a chopin of white beer ; and there they sat, stripping the skins from off the dried fish, and taking now a bite from the tail of the salted delicacy as they grasped it in their hand, and now a sup out of the wooden tankard in which the beer was served.

But poor Martin had no sooner set foot in the room, and begun to rattle the padlock against the side of his empty money-box, than the officious landlord rushed up to him (just as the boy had got his mouth open, ready for giving the customary cry), and seizing him by the shoulders, shouted, "There, pack thyself off, lout ! we want none of ye monkish beggars here ;" and he was about to thrust the little fellow from the room.

Hereupon a voice cried from one corner, "Nay! nay! not so rash, Host, not so rash. Seest thou not by the strippling's face that he be a newling in the town."

"Oh, hang 'em all on the Gallow's-hill, I say; have we not enough of the dole-seeking crew already among us," cried Cust Diener, who was one of the sheriffs for that year, "that we should be called upon to welcome as a friend each new mouzer that be added to the swarm?"

"Ay," chimed in the landlord, from behind the cask that stood at one side of the apartment, as he was busy drawing a fresh can-full for the ruddy-nosed sheriff who had just spoken. "Have we not to pay, I would ask ye, gentlemen, five groschens tax to the Prince-Elector upon every barrel of beer worth fifty groschens? and be not that enough out of our money-bags?"

"Yea, that be righteous," cried Hans Müller, who was one of the sworn guardians of the city; and then dashing his fist upon the table, he added, "and hath not every one who is worth a thousand guldens to pay one gulden every year besides towards this everlasting Turkish war?"

"Verily," chimed in Johann Holz, the goldsmith, "we be eaten up alive with the vermin about us."

"Come, come, cousins, what hath this lad done to ye," expostulated the same considerate voice from the corner,

“that ye should scoff at him thus? An your priests and your princes do make ye pay heavy toll, these screaming youngsters do ask ye but for a *pfenning* to help to pay for their learning at the school. Besides, they do treat you to a song, like the lark doth, ere ye be out of your beds, and surely in the land where Tannhauser did carry off the prize in the singers’ struggle at the Wartburg, ye will not grudge this little minstrel boy the smallest coin ye have in your purses;” and so saying, he rose from his seat and went towards Martin, to whom he added, “Give me thy currend-box, lad, and let me see what I can gather for thee: the neighbours be not so sour-blooded as they may seem.” Whereupon he took the money-box out of Martin’s hand and proceeded round the room, rattling it loudly at table after table, and calling, “*Co-o-or-end!*” in playful imitation of the well-known cry.

This set the whole assembly laughing, and the *pfennige* kept dropping in rapidly from the pockets of the now good-humoured burgesses. And when the collection was finished, the worthy citizen who had handed the box round, said, as he returned it smiling to little Luther, “There, boy, feel the heft of that! and listen! why, the pieces do chirrup within like to a nest of young golden-hammers. Hie thee now to Father John Trebonius, and let him see

how good a currender thou hast been." And then laying his hand upon the lad's head he bent his neck back, so that he might look well into his face. "Whence comest thou, my son?" he asked kindly.

"From Mansfeld, an it please thee," was the answer.

"Thy name," cried the rubicund sheriff, as he handed his chopin to the landlord to be re-filled, adding aside, "and do thou throw just a quarterkin of corn-brand-y-wine into it, for the beer doth drink a shade cold to me this morning."

"Martin Luther be my name," was the boy's proud reply: and, had it not been that the strangers' hand was on his head, the little fellow would have scowled at the crowd of citizens at the table next him, for he could hear them say sneeringly, "The Luthers be miners over by Kupfersuhl."

"Come then, Master Martin, since so thou be'st hight," said the one who had collected the money for him, "Shame not thyself at thy calling, for many a Pope before thee hath screamed his currend-song in the street, and who knows but what thou mayest come to sit in the chair of St. Peter one day?"

The little fellow could not help feeling pleased with the flattering speech of the burgess, and he answered smil-

ingly "My father doth say he would rather have me sit on the judgment-seat;" and immediately the answer was given, the town-councillors and magistrates cried as with one voice, "Well said of thy father, lad."

"The law be higher than the church," cried one.

"And so we'll teach these haughty priests, ere long," added another,—and then, as the burgess who had gone round with the box shook the little fellow by the hand, Martin said to him in the midst of the confusion, "What name shall I give to the Rector when I tell him of the gentleman who was so kind to me?"

"Tush! tush, lad! Names are naught but empty words to men of understanding; so go thy way and make other friends in the town, for thy trade doth stand sore in need of it."

"Look here!" cried Martin, once outside the door, to the little companion, who had been waiting for him there; "the box be nearly full; but come along, and I will tell thee all about it." And then off the couple trotted, the one recounting, the other listening to the particulars of the scene, as they descended the steep steps leading to the market-place.

As light-footed as they were light-hearted then, the two boys made their way to the Frauen-street, leading out to

the gate of the same name, and there they entered the bakers' shops, where little Martin, who had grown bold, rattled his box and cried, "*co-o-or-end!*" at the top of his voice; till the folk, who knew at a glance that his face was strange in the town, laughed out-right at the courage of the youngster, and some dropped money into his box, while others stuffed stale breadlets or broken biscuits into his pockets.

In the Butchers'-lane, however, he was less successful, for there the cloister-sisters had been before him, and cleared the place of every scrap of spare meat for the hospitals of the town. Nor did he fare much better in the tanners' quarter, seeing that most of the curriers had left for the Leipzig fair. Heinrich Lindemann, however, was still there, and he dropped a groschen in the box, and made the little fellow trill out his currend cry again and again, for the mere pleasure of hearing how he did it. The weavers, again, in the Lower-lane, had but little to give; still many dropped their pfennig in the box, and wished that they had the same chance of learning to read and write as the boys themselves; while some made Martin scrawl his name in chalk upon their wall, as they stood at his elbow, wondering how the marks were made. At the little chandlers' shops belonging to the so-called

"merchants"—where everything was sold, from dye-stuffs and drugs down to lamp-oil, ink, and red-herrings—it was the custom to keep all the suspicious-looking small coins of other duchies expressly to give to the currend-scholars, for they, the dealers knew, would be glad to take money that every other person rejected with scorn. And where no such doubtful pieces had been received in the course of the week, the lads were treated to a few broken sweetmeats, and wished God speed on their errand.

At length the whole town had been thus scoured, and Martin had intoned his currend cry in the passages of the wealthier burgesses, in the shaving-rooms of the barber-surgeons, in the sheds of the knife-smiths, in the gold-smiths' court-yards, in the boiling-houses of the soap-makers, and in the dye-houses of the dyers, till he was nigh hoarse from gurgling out the word ; so the two lads were hastening back to the Rector's house, and they had already reached the St. George's fountain, when Martin's companion stopped short as he reminded him that they had forgotten to call at the Cotta-house, saying that the gracious lady Ursula was one of the kindest of all the good-wives in the town to the currenders. Whereupon they retraced their steps, while Martin inquired whether

his companion meant the pleasant-looking dame who had nodded to them from the window of the house where they sang last that morning.

In a few minutes afterwards the couple of youngsters had mounted the broad oaken stair-case with its carved balustrades that led to the first floor of the mansion, and then opening the door which gave into the "*vorsaal*" (ante-room) of the apartment, Martin trilled forth, "*Co-o-or-end!*" till the walls echoed again with the sound.

The next moment the small folding doors of one of the sitting-rooms were thrown back, and Ursula Cotta, accompanied by little Heinrich, appeared with her purse dangling at her side, in answer to the call.

The only portrait of the good lady Ursula existing in the world, we have the best authority for saying, was destroyed in the great fire at Ilmenau, in the year 1752. But it is the peculiar charm of unusual goodness—or, indeed, of any high mental or moral excellence—that no mere literal transcript of features is needed; for to those who have imaginations sufficient to be touched or roused by the magnanimity recorded, there is ever a picture of the worthy suggested to the mind. And who that has read of Dame Cotta's befriending of the poor miner's son while starving in Eisenach, has

religious asceticism: and Ursula's charity was of too wholesome and hearty a kind not to have come from the most perfect health of body and mind—health that must have been painted in the fairest and brightest colours upon her cheeks, which, we would stake our faith, were as pinky as morning clouds, while her chin was as round and soft as a ripe peach. Nay, more, though we never set eyes upon the faintest sign of her bodily likeness, we are as sure as we are that we are not dreaming at this present moment, that the hand of this same dear old soul was a perfect model of beauty, for it is the special organ of charity and friendship; and in one who had these two lovely heart-qualities so finely marked, the hand that was made to wait upon them must, beyond doubt, have been exquisitely developed.

Moreover, the costume at the time in which she lived was just fitted to throw a picturesque grace about such a character. The female head-dress then generally worn in Eisenach, consisted of what is called *Kopf-lappen* (head-gear), and was merely a long white cloth of fine linen, which was arranged about the head, while the ends were left to hang down at the sides, very much after the fashion of the sister of charity's cap of the present day; so that the reader has but to fancy young Martin Luther standing in

the presence of some buxom, pleasant-looking, bright-eyed and rosy-cheeked nun, or lady-abbess, to have a tolerably good ideal of the kindly-hearted old merchant's wife who fostered the little bare-footed or Franciscan beggar-boy at the end of the 15th century.

"I have been watching for ye, lads, at the window," Ursula began, smiling, while little Heinrich Cotta stood staring at the two boys, and looking first at their bare legs showing beneath their little knee-breeches, and then at the new pair of cloth hose in which his own little calves were enveloped. "I did fear me ye had forgotten our house, when I did mark you cross the St. George's Place on your way back. There, give me thy box, my child," she added, and then dropping a piece of money through the lid, said, "*That* be for the school, and I have hidden our maid put up in a cloth some bits of meat, and part of the cream-cake that master Heinrich did have yester-noon for his birth-day; but *that* be for ye two alone, remember."

The currend-boys exchanged glances of delight with one another, and raised their hands to their fore-locks, as they bowed and made answer, "Our hearty thanks to thee, gracious dame."

Unheeding the reply, Ursula Cotta went towards Martin and said, as she patted him tenderly on the cheek,

"Thou be'st come but newly among us, I do think?" and then asked, "From what fold hast thou strayed, my little lamb?"

"I be from Mansfeld," was the answer.

"So wide as Mansfeld is thy home, poor child! and thy father has more mouths at his board than he hath food to feed them with, I warrant me," the good soul ran on, "or thy mother would never send thee to beg thy schooling in the streets of Eisenach." And then drawing her son Heinrich to her side, she added, "See, Heinrich, all the little birds'-nests are not so well feathered as thine, child. Did I not tell thee so, when thou didst pout and sulk last night, because I would not let thee have the rest of thy cream-cake that I had set aside for these poor little ones? There, run thou and bring it hither, so that thou canst see the lads eat it before thee. It will be a good lesson for thee through life, my son."

And while the boy was gone on his errand, Ursula drew Martin towards her and asked once more, "Art thou not the little sweet-throated lark that I did hear warbling so prettily at my gate this morning?"

The boy's face went crimson with blushes at the speech, and he hung his head while he modestly replied: "I did sing the first part of the Sabbath carol to-day, gracious lady."

"I did think as much, straight when I did see thy pretty face again," she said. "What be thy name's-day?" then she went on, inquiring.

"St. Martin, an it please thee, lady."

"Soh thou be'st called after the holy St. Martin—eh, my little fawn! and he be the patron saint of Thuringia. Let me look at thine eyes, lad;" and then as she bent the boy's head back, she added: "Why, they be as blue and clear as the summer-sky, and thy hair, too, as golden as the ripe corn," and she passed her hand over his head and brushed the locks from his forehead. "Thou be'st a pretty bashful babe, that thou be'st, and didst deserve a softer lot in life; but the good Father that feedeth the fowls of the air will not forget to scatter a few grains to thee."

At this moment little Heinrich Cotta returned with the pieces of cake arranged on the old-fashioned wooden-platter, around the rim of which was carved, "HE THAT WILL NOT WORK, NEITHER SHALL HE EAT." This was set down on the top of the handsome old oak chest that was embossed all over with carved figures of the Apostles, and bas-reliefs of Christ rising from the tomb, and of the Day of Judgment, with the skeletons waking up from their graves—a piece of furniture that usually stood in the hall of old mansions.

"Here sit ye, my children, on the lid of the chest, and eat and be comforted," said Ursula, while little Heinrich stood hard by, watching each bite that the youngsters took in *his* cake, but with very different feelings from those of his mother, as she smiled again to see how the boys relished the treat.

"But Martin," she said, "thou hast no mantle like thy companion, for the mornings be bitterly sharp still."

"The Herr-Rector of the school did say, an I were eager at my books, he would ask the abbess of the Katharina Kloster to let the nuns work me one," was the reply.

"The sisters have enough to do," went on the dame, "to tend the sick and gather up the orts of the town, to feed the poor in the spitals, my son; so we will try and save them the pains."

Martin looked astonished at the good-wife, for he did not half understand what she meant. However, he was not long in doubt, for she added quickly, "When thou dost next come round with thy currend, lad, thou shalt find that a mantle hath fallen from Heaven for thee, as it did of old upon Elisha's shoulders."

"I know," cried Martin, "he was the servant of Elijah, whose mantle it was that fell upon him, as his master was carried up in a whirlwind to the skies. My

father hath told me the story oft in the Whitsun-feast days."

"Good lad!" cried the pious Ursula; "and hast thy father many such as thou?"

"Four sons and as many daughters," was the reply; "one of whom doth bear the same name as thyself, good lady," added the boy, while his eyes twinkled with delight at the thought.

"Soh! thou hast a sister Ursula—eh?" mused Dame Cotta. "Well, come again soon, and thy sister's namesake will see an she cannot have a nice warm blue cloak ready to welcome thee." And then laying a hand upon the head of either boy, she said, "Fare thee well, and be as eager at thy books as John Trebonius did wish thee."

As the lads were about to leave, they met, on the landing outside, a tall, noble-looking citizen, with a square-cut white beard and habited in a long fur-lined cloak, the sleeves of which reached to the ground—the arms being thrust through an opening in the seam near the top. The boys each raised their hand to their head and bowed respectfully as they passed, while the worthy in return lifted the little black velvet "muffin cap" from his crown, as he said, "I bend myself to ye, my sons;" and then as he disappeared through the door, Martin nudged his com-

panion, and whispered in his ear, "That be the grand gentleman that did take the box round for me in the *Raths-keller*, and did cry 'currend' as well as you or I could."

"That be Conrad Cotta, I tell thee," said his companion in the same low tone, "the rich merchant and just magistrate of Eisenach. Folk do say that he doth travel all the way to the island-city of Venice, once every year, and that he hath dealings even with the kingdom of Spain."

"Bless him!" ejaculated Martin, and the scene ended.

CHAPTER XX.

“THERE IS NOTHING SWEETER ON EARTH THAN THE
HEART OF A WOMAN IN WHICH PITY DWELLS.” *

THOUGH young, Martin Luther had reason to be thankful, at first, for the change from the school of the Begging Friars at Magdeburg, to that of the Barefooted Monks at Eisenach—though the grandeur of the mountain scenery of Thuringia filled his young soul with gladness, as he sat on the hill-tops overlooking the Frauenthal, and gazed into the lovely valley below—though he delighted to wander among the solemn solitude of the woods, and through the wondrous clefts in the big rocks by the Elias Cave—and though he found a new world of beauty in the wild ravine of the *Landgrafensloch*, and the then impassable gorge of the *Gehauene-stein-thal* that was like a deep crack in the

* These are Martin Luther's own words when recalling in after life the kindness of Ursula Cotta to him, while he was a poor currend scholar in Eisenach.

crust of the earth—nevertheless it was not many weeks before the same misery as he had endured at the Cathedral city on the Elbe came over him again, as though it were a doom, and made even the loveliness of the land by which he was encompassed seem utterly blank, if not ugly, to him.

His friends at home had believed that if Martin were sent to the current-school in Eisenach, that their now relatives in the town would never allow the boy to suffer as he had at the monks' school in Magdeburg; but relatives, alas! are often but sorry, hollow-hearted friends; and Heinrich Lindemann, the Frau Luther's brother, was too much a man of the world, and too full of worldly ambition, to pay particular heed to the wants of a poor begging scholar; so, though the tanner welcomed the lad to his board at first, he grew, in a very little while, to grudge him a place at his table. Indeed the tanner-master's head was full of the idea of getting re-elected to the office of sheriff of the town, and it wounded his pride to think a nephew of his had been sent to Eisenach to beg the money for his schooling in the streets there. Besides, he feared that if the burgesses met the young beggar at his house, they would get to doubt his own trust-worthiness for the post; so he grew colder and colder to the little

fellow day after day, until at length Martin, who was quick enough to detect the slight, turned upon his heel in his pride, and vowed that he would never darken his uncle's threshold again.

The boy, however, found a fine sterling friend in John Trebonius, the learned and conscientious Rector of the Eisenach Currend-school at that time. The quick-witted teacher soon discovered the fine intellect and staunch spirit of the youth, whose training had been entrusted to his care ; so, day after day, he would send for him and bid him sit down at his table when he knew that Martin had failed to gather in the town sufficient for that day's meal. For the citizens in those days were so beset with beggars of all kinds—beggars by religion, and beggars by trade—and so ground down by the heavy imposts of the feudal lords and barons—having to pay, indeed, a groschen in every ten they earned for the mere support of the court—that it was no wonder a simple-hearted and proud-natured boy should have failed to thrive as well in the town as the more wily monks, who knew, not only how to beg, but how to *bribe* with promised absolution, or even—should all gentle methods fail—how to *threaten* with all kinds of worldly penance and future tortures, in order to extort the desired dole.

Still Martin was well aware, and John Trebonius's own conscience told him, too, that he was not the only scholar entrusted to his charge ; besides, many other boys were as badly off as he, and the poor Rector, with his slender means, could not possibly feed them every one. The lad's schoolfellows, moreover, soon began to twit young Martin with being the Rector's pet, and to tell him that *of course* one who dined thrice a week at the rector's table could do no wrong ; so, when John Trebonius himself discovered the jealousy he was creating among his pupils, he was too just a man not to acknowledge to himself that it was unfair to display any such favouritism, when he was alike bound to sympathise with and to foster each and all committed to his charge. Consequently, Martin became gradually a less frequent guest at the rector's table ; for, as the master grew less earnest in his invitations, young Martin got to be less anxious to repeat his visits ; and thus it came about at last that the poor lad was left as utterly destitute, even among his friends in the Thuringian town, as he had been in his friendlessness during his stay in the great cathedral city on the banks of the Elbe.

Dame Ursula Cotta, indeed, was the only one in all the place who had either the means or the heart to assist him ;

she never saw the boy at mass without waiting to lay her hand upon his head and ask how it fared with him; and never did he sing his matin song at her door without the dame being present at the window to listen to his carol or without her nodding her approbation to him ere he left. Nor did he ever rattle his money-box or sound his cry of "Come-or-end" in her hall without there being a bundle of meat and bread, with occasionally a little fruit or cake left on the chest against his coming.

But though this happened thrice in the week, Martin had to live or starve, as best he could, on the four other days that make up the seven. Nor did even this scanty subsistence continue uninterruptedly for any long time: for, unhappily for poor Martin, Lent commenced shortly after his arrival in Nuremberg, and then all he got was hard-boiled eggs and salted rolls to eat—a diet under which he felt all the languid and disheartening symptoms of debility which he had experienced in Magdeburg graduating upon him again, whilst, as if to bring his misery to a climax, he found towards the end of the month, that Doctor Ursula, his only friend in the city, was gone on a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Holy Virgin, as it was called, which was situate at a journey's distance from Nuremberg—a journey that he soon learnt

was nearly twenty hours' distance from Eisenach, and which he knew *must*, in those days of bad roads and worse conveyances, occupy at least a week in going and returning.

Well, the stout-hearted little fellow bore the blow as he had borne many harder blows before; and as he knew it was almost useless to beg for food day after day at the bakers' shops, or the chapman's stores, at that hard season of the year, or even of the peasant women who brought their eggs, honey, and vegetables to the market, he would wander far away into the country along the old road called the Wine-street (*Weinstrasse*), which had been made by Charlemagne, till he reached the top of the hill named the "Dragon's Stone;" and there he would sit and read his Virgil and his Plautus, and look down at the beautiful little green world of valley and villages below, encompassed with its grand, wooded bank of lofty Thuringian hills; while as his cravings returned, he would first try to divert the yearning by thinking of them all at home, and fancying what they were each doing at that moment; and when that failed, he would fall upon his bended knees, and with uplifted hands pray to the God above him to give him strength to bear up against his bodily sufferings.

Thus matters went on until a few days before Easter, when it was Martin's turn to go round the town with the second half of the choir-scholars. John Trebonius knew how bitterly most of the boys had suffered from insufficiency of food during the long Lent season, and had written a new carol, with a view of rousing the citizens to show some little charity towards his poor scholars ; and he had selected Martin to render the words, which were to be sung by the one boy alone, not only on account of his sweet, plaintive voice, but because of his clear, emphatic utterance.

Accordingly, away the boys proceeded on their mission, long before daylight ; still it was to little purpose. The few people who were abroad, so far from being moved by the appeal, told the singers that they had fasted too long themselves to listen to their monkish cajolery ; while others said the priests charged so high to allow them to eat flesh in the fasting-tide, that they had better go to the good holy pastors, and sing the maudlin stuff to them.

However, at last the choir came to the Cotta's house once more ; and there, to Martin's extreme joy, he beheld the good Dame Ursula sitting at the window, as was her wont, waiting to hear the boys' matin song. The welcome

sight of her kindly face gave the poor faint lad new heart, and he poured out the lay with an earnestness which he had failed before to throw into either the words or the music, and with his eyes upturned to the good merchant's wife, warbled forth as follows :

“ Bread, in God's name, we beseech thee ! ”

Here the choir-boys chimed in, “ *Panem propter Deum !* ”

Whereupon Martin sang by himself, as before,

“ Kindness thine own babes will teach thee.”

And then the choir chanted solemnly again, “ *Panem propter Deum !* ”

After which Martin once more took up the principal strain, singing,

“ Lots in life are sore uneven ;

Think how much *they've* had from Heaven,

To *us* how little hath been given.”

When the chorus a third time burst forth in a loud supplicating tone, “ *Panem propter Deum !* ”

And immediately the burden had died away, one of the youngest of the scholars stepped forward, and, shaking his money-box, cried aloud, “ Co-o-or-end ! ”

Then the other verses were given in the same manner, with the same intermittent chorus, and the same charac-

teristic cry at the conclusion of each stanza, the work being as follows :—

Martin sings alone,

“ Wanting bread is bitter anguish.”

The choir chant softly, “ *Panem propter Deum!* ”

Martin sings alone,

“ For a crust we pine and languish.”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum!* ”

Martin sings alone,

“ Take no heed, then, of the morrow,

For the day suffice the sorrow ;

Lend the Lord what we would borrow.”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum!* ”

The youngest of the scholars cries again, “ Co-o-or-end ! ”

Martin sings alone,

“ Gratitude’s life’s sweetest pleasure.”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum!* ”

Martin sings alone,

“ Blessing more than hoarded treasure.”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum!* ”

Martin sings alone,

“ Nothing yields so large a profit ;

Boundless love comes ever of it—

Largess merchant-prince might covet !”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum !*”

The youngest of the scholars calls once more “ Co-o-or-end !”

Martin sings alone,

“ Oft is pity pity's breeding.”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum !*”

Martin sings alone,

“ Some day pity ye'll be needing.”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum !*”

Martin sings alone,

“ Pity have, then, while ye've power ;

Sow the seed, ere long 'twill flower.

Soon it chimes the eleventh hour !”

The choir chant, “ *Panem propter Deum !*”

All the younger boys shout together, “ Co-o-or-end !”

At the conclusion of the carol, Martin was about to follow the rest of the choir on their way back to the

school; and after having stood for a minute gazing up at the dame, as he wondered why she failed to nod and smile to him as usual, a servant came up to him and, tapping him on the shoulder, said her mistress wished to speak with him awhile.

Half-frightened lest he might have offended the lady unwittingly, the boy followed the maid up the staircase, and in the next minute stood in the presence of the pious merchant-wife.

"Come hither, my son," she began; "thy words have touched me as if some heavenly cherub had chanted them in my ear. Whence didst thou get them, lad?"

The answer was, "The Herr Rector did write them for me to sing this morning."

"How runneth the beginning of the second verse?" inquired the dame; "let me hear it again."

Whereupon Martin intoned the words—

"Wanting bread is bitter anguish;

For a crust we pine and languish."

"Enough," cried Ursula; and be those words fable or Gospel?"

The little fellow turned his head away and remained mute: whereupon the dame rose, and, going towards him, curled her arm about his neck, and as she did so ex-



Ursula Cotta and Martin Luther.



claimed, "Why, thou art crying, poor child! Oh, yea, it was thoughtless of me to go so far away, and never to give heed to what was to become of thee in my absence!"

The tender words of the soft-hearted mother were too much for the equally soft-hearted boy to bear; so, weakened by long study and long fasting, the room began to grow suddenly dark before him, as the blood went rushing up to his brain with the emotion; then he felt his head swim till the floor seemed to be whirling round with him, and then he staggered, like one intoxicated, and finally fell fainting at Dame Ursula's feet.

A wild scream broke from the dame's lips, and she shrieked aloud, as she knelt down beside the body of the boy, "Here, Conrad! Heinrich! help, help!"

In a minute the merchant and his little son rushed into the room, and as they did so the wife gasped out, "See here, my man, what my shrine-faring hath brought upon me. I shall have this poor lad's death to answer for. Oh, why couldst not thou, Conrad, have given one thought to the luckless little fellow, while I was from the house? Go get a bowl of milk for him, Heinrich. The blood hath left his face, and his hands be icy cold," she added, grasping them; and then, laying her palm upon his breast, exclaimed, "Nor can I feel his heart beat either. Oh, he

be dead! dead!" and the good soul wept over the stranger boy as if he had been of her own kith and kin.

"Nay, nay, Ursula, the child hath swooned," remonstrated Conrad in a soothing tone. "Come thou away, and let me undo his mantle" (it was the one Ursula had made him): "his collar, be far too tight. A little air will soon set his heart pulsing again!"

And as the merchant bared the boy's neck and bosom, the wife cried, "Dost mark, Conrad, how thin he be? See, his breast-bone be nigh starting through his skin."

At this moment Heinrich came running into the room with the bowl of milk his mother had ordered, and the little fellow was about to kneel down so that he might put it to the other's lips, when his father told him to set it on the table, and to run to the three-cornered cupboard in the angle of the room, and bring him the flagon of cherry-water there, saying a sup of that would soon bring the blood back to his cheeks.

"I do tell thee he wants air," cried Ursula; "I do see him gasping for the lack of it." And as she said the words she ran and set every window open, crying the while, "Quick! quick, Heinrich! stand thee upon the chair, or we shall have him dying at our feet! God spare

but his life," she added, "and this roof shall shelter him for the future."

However, as Conrad had predicted, a draught of the potent *kirsch-wasser* which the merchant had brought with him from the Black Forest on his return from Italy, soon revived him, and the lad, on opening his eyes, smiled his thanks, as he saw them one and all bending over him.

Then the merchant proceeded to hand the boy to a chair near the open window ; and when the colour was fairly back again in the boy's cheeks, he said to Ursula, "Thou seest, sweetheart, God hath spared his life ; dost thou call to mind what thou didst swear in thy fright ?"

"That do I," the dame returned, "that this roof should shelter him for the time to come."

Martin, who was sufficiently recovered to understand the words, stared in wild wonder at the speakers.

"Well, wife, and is it to be so?" asked Conrad quietly ; and then pointing to the youth, added laughing, "See how amazed the boy doth look, doubting whether he be awake or still dreaming."

"Didst thou ever know thy wife, Conrad, unsay her words?" was the dame's simple answer.

"This is to be his home, then, I take it," exclaimed Conrad submissively.

"An thou doth grant thy leave, husband," returned Ursula, bending respectfully to the master of the household; "I alone, thou knowest, have not the power, but only the wish, to make the boy our guest. What sayest thou, good man?"

"Oh, father, *do* let him stop with us," begged little Heinrich; "thou knowest there be that little room that doth look into the street by the corner of the Butchers'-lane. He can have that to sleep in—can't he, mother?"

"Thou must put the question to thy father, lad," said Ursula Cotta. "What sayest thou, Conrad, to the child's pleadings?"

"Hast thou not children enough of thine own, Ursula," inquired her husband sternly, "that thou canst still find a spare corner in thy heart to give to this poor friendless lad?"

The wife remained silent.

"And for thee, Heinrich," he went on, "is not thy little brother Bonaventura playmate enough, but thou must needs have a third to eat thy cake and share thy toys?"

There was still no answer; for both the mother and son feared that the questions were meant as reproaches to them.

"Well, then," said Conrad, "an it be the will of ye

both, why, all I can say is, 'Thy will be done;'" and then rising from his seat he went towards the boy, and, grasping his hand as a friend, said, "Thou hearest, my son; this little man here would have thee for a brother; and this good woman craves to play the mother to thee. Do thou but give *them* love enough for their love, and thou wilt give *me* all the reward I covet. So be thou our foster-son from this time forth."

Martin rose from his seat and kissed the hand of the generous old merchant; and then, approaching Ursula, he raised her hand to his lips, likewise, and kissed it again and again, while the hot tears that fell upon her wrist told the dame, far better than any words, what the poor boy was struggling to say. And before he had time to reach little Heinrich, the child had flung his arms about the other's neck, as he kissed Martin on the cheek, and cried, "Brother, brother."

And from that time forward Martin Luther dwelt in the old Cotta-house as one of the fine old Cotta family.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARTIN AT THE COTTA-HOUSE.

WHAT the Wartburg at Eisenach was to Martin Luther in after-life, the Cotta-house in the same town was to him in his childhood—the “Patmos” of his younger days, whither he retired in his exile from home to avoid the beggars’ martyrdom that threatened him.

The little ante-room in which the poor currend scholar was lodged in this domicile exists to this day. It is about as big as a pantry, and, though bearing no traces of the time when Martin occupied it, serves still to realize the kindness of the merchant’s family to the lad, and to suggest to the mind the many happy days that the youth must have passed under that now queer-fashioned old roof. A single visit to the spot is sufficient to set us fancying how often within these same walls Martin must have played with little Heinrich Cotta at the game of “strike-ball” out in the “hof,” or court-yard below ; how many a time he and young Cotta must have gone gambolling through

those chambers in their mimic sport of "*fuhr-leute*" (coachmen); how he must have sat by the hour in those rooms making whistles, or pop-guns, or shooting-pipes for his little playmate out of the branches of soft green-wood they had gathered in their walks in the fields beside the Hörsel-stream; and how, too, when, after days of long labour, he had managed to manufacture a cross-bow for little Heinrich, and they had set up some rudely-fashioned wooden imitation of a bird in the hof, the couple played together there at the popular "*vogel-schiefsen-spiel*" (bird-shooting game) for the petty prizes of sugarsticks or marbles, after the habit of German boys down to this time—and even as Martin Luther himself, when he had grown a grave man, still delighted to play with his own children.

Think of the miraculous stories that the pious Ursula must have recounted, in those very rooms, to the religious-minded youth as to the wondrous charities of the holy Elizabeth, about whose virtues the whole Thuringian country was ringing at that time—for the young saint of a princess had lived not so very many years before, and had passed her life at the castle on the hill that overlooked the town. How must Ursula, too, have delighted, as she sat working some bit of tapestry, with little Martin maybe resting

on the foot-stool at her feet in that large chamber, looking down into the St. George's Place, to narrate to the little fellow tales about the stolen Princes of Thuringia, or of Frederick with the bitten cheek ; for such matters were sure to have been deeply impressed upon her tender motherly mind, seeing that they were the "sensation events" at that time of comparatively but yesterday ; and we can imagine the dame in the long evenings after Heinrich and Bonaventura had bidden her, "sleep well" for the night, and Conrad had gone to the "Raths-keller" to talk with his brother burgesses over their can of white beer, upon the feudal and clerical grievances of the day, sitting alone with the little fellow who was destined to become the greatest man of his age, and whiling away the tedious hours with her pretty Thuringian histories and legends.

The poor shorn lamb, young Martin, indeed, had suffered much in getting tempered to the winds ; but now the back of the little yeanning was well clad, he had a snug fold, and grazed, comparatively speaking, in clover. The Cotta days were, perhaps, the sunniest throughout his stormy life ; and the sweet spring-time of his boyhood now was bursting forth with every kind of tender bud after the bitter chill of his earlier years.

At the house of Conrad Cotta he met and made lasting friends with many of the worthiest people in Eisenach. Johann Braun, the young vicar of the city, who often came there to play a game at "tables" with the merchant magistrate, got to love the boy, not alone on his own account, but because he remembered how Martin's father had travelled many a long mile to be present at *his* father's funeral. Johannes Trebonius and Jodocus Trutvetter, the two teachers at the Georgen School were frequent visitors at the house also, for Conrad was a great "patron of learning," as the city magistrates loved to be styled in olden times; and as the two pedagogues got to know the boy in his holiday costume as it were, they failed not to see that he had other qualities in his nature than a mere aptness for learning, marking, day after day, not only the tenderness of his soul in his deep affection for those who had befriended him, but the boldness of his spirit in combating whatever he, in his boyish innocence, might fancy to be untrue or unjust.

But, though many got to love young Martin Luther at this time, few or none discovered in the quondam beggar-boy the germ of the moral giant into which he was ultimately to expand. Indeed, to do his friends justice, Martin in his schoolhood gave no sign of what was to be

the salient point of his character. His only sense of religion then was that of terror, and he feared to speak or even to think of the subject. Among the monks he had noted that penances, scourging, and all manner of bodily suffering, were the forms by which the most earnest of the holy men sought to win their way to Heaven (for he was too young yet awhile to see through the cheats and tricks of the more worldly of the brotherhood); so, though he was naturally of a pious temperament, he dreaded to worry his conscience with matters which in his mind were connected with the agonies of souls in purgatory, from which it required so much money for masses to free them; and he turned with horror away from the bodily torments of everlasting fire and brimstone, which he had seen even the most needy were glad to pay their pfennig at the Holy House in the hopes of getting quit of. Besides, he knew his father's ambition was, that he should become one of the judges of the city in which he lived; and the boy, when he saw the respect which was paid to Conrad Cotta by the citizens of Eisenach, himself wished for no better lot in life.

One evening, when the rector of the currend-school was seated at the window, playing chess with Conrad, and young Martin stood beside the board, wondering at the

movements of the "bishops" and the "castles," he said, hurriedly, as if the thought had struck him of a sudden, while the schoolmaster waited for the next "move" of the magistrate, "Oh, but, Herr Rector, I would fain ask thee one question that I have long wished to put to thee. I do mark that, whenever thou comest among the boys at the currend-school thou dost ever raise thy cap to the lads; and throughout our land thou knowest it be the wont with the learning youngsters to bare *their* heads to their teachers! Indeed, but yesternoon I did note a journeyman-carpenter in the street seize an apprentice by the ear, and fling the boy's cap into the gutter, because the lad had forgotten to pay him the respect that all grown men do look for from the young."

"Yea," said Conrad, as he looked up, and smiled with the thought of the lucky move he had made, "I myself have often heard, Herr Rector, from the citizens in the beerhouses, that thy scholars do get more respect from thee than thou canst ever hope to reap from them."

"Wait awhile, and I will answer thee," replied the master of the school. And when he had pushed his "pawn" forward, he looked up and said, "Those whose eyes see boys *only* as boys, may well wonder at my bearing to my scholars; but I know how many a fine fellow has

sung his currend songs in the streets, and I do think to myself, when I go among the lads, 'There be youngsters here whom God will one day raise up to be burgomasters, chancellors, doctors, and magistrates. And though the eyes of men do not yet see them with the badges of honour about them, it is right that the young knights should be treated with the same respect as if they had already won their spurs.'*

"That be righteous!" said Conrad, "the teacher should ever seek to lift up the scholar to his own loftiness, and not dwarf himself to the standard of children and of fools."

Martin glowed with delight at the speech, for he thought of the time when his father was to see him sitting as magistrate on the judgment bench of the city of Mansfeld.

"Hast thou heard the news, Martin?" said Johann Braun, as he stopped for awhile looking over "*The Book of Psalms*," that was one of the earliest volumes printed by Faust and Schœffer at Mainz, and which the merchant had newly brought from Frankfurt, as one of the wonders

* These were, more or less, the schoolmaster's own words, on being asked to account for conduct which astonished if not offended many in those feudal days.

of that time ; “ I did have it from the barber when he did come to cup me yestereve, as is his wont every month, and he did get it from the *voigt* of the “ *ritter gut* ” (knight’s farm), by Langensalza, whose arm he was sent for to set last market-day, and he, again, did learn it from the forester by Sondershausen.”

“ Tut ! tut ! ” cried Conrad, impatiently, “ never mind the chain of talebearers, but let us have thy tidings, man alive.”

“ Well,” went on Johann, “ there hath been a great burning near thy home, Martin.”

“ Where ? ” cried the lad, in alarm, rushing away from the chess-table, and seating himself close beside the pastor.

“ In Eisleben, my son,” was the reply ; “ and more than one-half of the town be in ashes, the folk do say.”

“ Didst thou hear, an it please thee,” asked the boy, innocently, “ whether our old house, in the Lange-gasse, by the Halle-gate, hath been saved, for that be the spot where I was born ; and many a time, when I have journeyed with mother over to the market there, have I loved to go with her and look up at the old window of the little room on the first floor wherein she did tell me I did first see the light.”

Conrad and Johannes Trebonius both looked round and smiled with admiration at the tender affection of the lad.

"I know not this same Lange-gasse thou speakest of so lovingly," was the answer; "but I did hear that the great copper ball on top of St. Peter and St. Paul's Church did fall with a mighty crash to the earth, when the flames did catch the tower of the pile."

"Oh, woe to me!" cried Martin, sorrowfully; "I know the old-place well, and loved it dearly, too; and all the beautiful banners of the burghers with which the aisles were filled, are like to have been burnt likewise. Mayhap the font in which I was baptised is gone too, and I away here unable to have a peep even at the ruins. Indeed and indeed, it doth make me sad at heart to hear the news. But did any lose their lives, knowest thou, Herr Pastor? perchance thou heardest the names of some; I should be sure to know them an thou didst but tell them to me."

"The barber, my news-bearer, did not speak to me of any, but merely said that the fire had spread to the Rath-haus, adding, that though the walls of this were left standing, the copper sheathing with which it was roofed was all melted by the flames, and that the molten metal did stream down like drops of blood into the streets."

"The Rath-haus fine copper roof gone as well!" cried the miner's son; "oh, that is wide away from St. Peter's Church, and tells how great a blaze there must have been. But what doth hurt me most is the news of the harm done to the church I love, the best in all the town. I should tell thee, Herr Stadt-rath Cotta," the boy ran on in his excitement, "that father hath often told me it was but nine years before he did come to the town of Eisleben that the big ball was set up on top of St. Peter's tower; and he did say it was made of the finest rose copper, too (for being a smelter, as thou knowest, he could judge well of such things), and that it did weigh upward of two hundred pounds—think of that! two hundred pounds!" ejaculated the boy, who had seen the smelted metal, over and over again, run out upon the hearths of his father's ovens, and knew how long it would take to get *such* a quantity from the worthless-looking slate ore which yielded it.

The magistrate, the schoolmaster, and the pastor stared in pleasant wonder at the earnestness of the lad, while Johann Braun, the vicar, said jocularly to him, "And didst thou love the church, Martin, only for the big copper ball on top of it?"

"Nay," answered the boy, who had all the associations of a miner's son strong in his nature; "but it was a won-

drous ball, Herr Pastor. Why, the gilding of it alone did cost no less than twenty-six Hungarian guildens. Father loved to stand and gaze at it as much as I. Besides, he did know the Herren Claus Furre and Claus Kniese, who were the altar-folk at the time when the ball was set up, and he did have it from them that inside of the globe was placed a parchment writing, saying, 'To praise the Almighty God and his loving mother, Mary, as well as to honour the high-respected Heaven-princes, St. Peter and St. Paul, this tower hath been built with the alms of pious Christians.' And moreover they did put within the ball one of the holy teeth of St. Christoph; so that, as the parchment did tell, it might be saved from storms of hail and lightning, as well as from fire and wind."

"And yet thou seest, lad," added Conrad, who, like the rest of the burghers, had got to have but little faith in the potency of such relics, "the grinder of the saint did not stay the flames."

The vicar and the learned rector exchanged glances, as much as to say, "Thou seest the times in which we live, friend!" but each thought it prudent to abstain from discussing the subject in the presence of the youth.

So, to turn the conversation into another channel, Johann Braun said, half sarcastically, "In the olden

times all the folk of Thuringia were heathens ;” and then, for the instruction of the youth, he went on to tell him how, in the great Thuringian forest, the people were wont to offer on the tops of hills, once every year, sacrifices to the thunder-god, who was called “ Thor,” from the worship of whom the name of Thuringia, he added, was believed by many to have sprung. And the pastor went on to inform the boy how cakes used to be baked in the shape of the sun’s rays at such times ; and when the folk had eaten of them, and the crumbs had been all collected, the remains were then strewn over the fields to make them fertile.

“ Yea,” chimed in the master of the school, ever glad, schoolmaster-like, to show his learning, “ and the blood of slain horses was the main offering at such time, because the people were taught that there were fiery steeds harnessed to the chariot of the sun.”

“ But hold, reverend gentlemen,” interposed Conrad, “ ere ye plumb the depths of our folks’ past belief, a glass of Malaga and an olive would serve to whet your classic appetites. I have a choice bottle here, that was sent me but lately from an agent of mine in Spain. Or, may be, learned rector,” added the magistrate, addressing himself to Johannes Trebonius, “ thou wouldst like a taste of the

true Russian caviar. I have heard thee say thou didst think it had a delicate smack. I have some sent me from the borders of the Black Sea (for we merchants, thou knowest, Herr Rector, have dealings in all parts); and when spread on the black bread of our country, it doth eat most toothsome with a glass of the real Spanish wine, I can tell thee."

"I beg! an it please thee, I will try a steak of the caviar and bread, since thou art so loud in thy praises of the delicacy," answered the schoolmaster, who, although a learned monk, had sufficient worldly knowledge to understand the worldly beauties of what the Germans call "*delicatessen*."

And when the feast had been served, Conrad went on saying, "But didst thou not tell me, Herr Rector, that the Goddess of Death, '*Frau Holle*,' as she was termed, if I remember right, was worshipped here likewise, and that the folk believed that she came every Christmastide out of the Hörschel mountain, over towards Gotha, and went through the Thuringian forest, strewing gifts to the busy spinners, and threatening with all kinds of tortures those who had been idle at their wheel?"

The schoolmaster answered, and he looked at Martin, as he gave forth the ancient law, "Yea, and the priests did fable to the simple peasant-folk—mere woodmen and

swineherds as they were—that the earth was a great giant, whose name was Ymer, and that the rivers and streams were but the blood of his arteries and veins ; that the rocks of the mountains were his bones, the stones his teeth, and the grass and the brushwood his hair ; while they did tell the peasantry that the sky above was his brain, adding, that out of the poplar and the ash trees the first man and woman were formed.”

While the curious history went on, Martin sat agape, wondering, in his innocence, if the God that men worshipped in his time was different from those of old. The boy knew the Creator only as the thunderer and the author of plagues and pestilences, and he speculated within himself whether there was any holy house then, where the people paid their *pfennig* to ward off the wrath of Holle, the death-goddess.

“ But,” urged the magistrate, after he had explained to the lad how their old courts of law were held in the open air, and how both the wronger and the wronged were bound in olden times to come before the judge unarmed, “ it be doubtful whether our people be in their hearts a whit better still than the worshippers of Sater, the God of Time, as he was called of old ; for thou knowest, Herr Pastor Johann Braun and Herr Rector Johannes, that the

boors among us even yet do love at every Eastertide to carry an old, dressed-up doll round about the town, whilst they sing the rude rhymes,—

‘ Old Thor we carry wide from us ;

His grave’s behind the shepherd’s house.’ *

Here Johann Braun spake out: “ Who heedeth the wont of a simple peasant-folk ? The burial of this old pagan god, Thor, be a feast and a holiday among the boors ; still even the simplest in the land doth know that it was the great God above, and not the heathen thunderer, who did send, at the end of the ninth century, the great pest of insects from the east that did eat, in one small hour, the corn from one hundred acres hereabouts ; for not a hedger and ditcher but hath heard from his grandfather, who did have it from his father’s father before him, that the memorable blight of the ‘ hay-scarers ’ was such, that the light of the sun was darkened by them at that time ; and how the deadly black vomit did break out straight after

* This ancient Thuringian custom continued down to within the last five-and-twenty years ; and it is a curious example of the love of these folk for old forms, that every male person, on entering the justice-house of the town of Eisenach, has to this day to undergo a personal search, so that the police may be satisfied he carries no weapon hidden under his clothes.

in the land ; and the winter's snow, next year, did lie in the valleys from Martinmas to the day of the Crucifixion."

And thus the time passed : one day Martin was listening to the pretty motherly or religious stories of Dame Ursula ; next he was hearing from the lips of Conrad or his learned guests some account of the peculiar customs and institutions of the country in which he was living ; or else his mornings were spent either in boyish games and sports with little Heinrich, or in pointing out to the baby boy, Bonaventura, the letters in the book of horn that then formed the tablets out of which the young were taught their alphabet.

Still, when the warm-hearted youth came to be alone in his little chamber looking out on to the butchers' lane, he would often turn his thoughts homeward, and talk aloud to himself about his sister Lena and his mother ; and while he recalled all the pleasant scenes and places of his childhood, he would yearn for the time when he was to return to them all ; so that scarce a night passed but he did not sleep till his pillow was damp with his tears.

It was while under the Cotta's roof, too, that the love of music, which formed so salient a point in Martin's after

character, received its first training in childhood, he had been gifted with a good voice, and it was to this pretty fellow that he owed his introduction to the Cotta. At that time unskilled in the use of any instrument, however, loved dearly to hear the fellow sing to her in the long evening. He was strongly attached to all the native songs, observing the bent of the land. He "zither" to be made for him in the town of Sonneberg, and had the head of it carved by the holy Elizabeth distributing flowers and lilies from her lap, so that the fellow might learn to accompany him on the Thuringian lute, that Tannhauser himself played.

And when young Martin had got to the instrument, the magistrate taught him many of the simple old folks' songs, and singing them to Dame Ursula while he was at work.

Then every night Ursula would bid him wish her "sleep well," sing to her the Thuringian ditty whose simple words were dearer to her more than all. Whereupon the

seat himself at her feet, and with his "*cithera*" in his lap, pour forth the following ancient country strain :—

"While sitting on this bank of clover, my love hath tuned my zither's strings. How can I, then, forget my lover, whose voice with softest music rings ?

"While sitting on this bank of clover, my love with cherries hath me fed. How can I, then, forget my lover, whose lips than cherries are more red ?

"While sitting on this bank of clover, we heard the hum of honey bee. How can I, then, forget my lover, than honey sweeter far to me ?" *

Indeed, as we said before, the poor shorn lamb was now in clover ; and though he never again knew such want as he had endured before becoming an inmate of the Cotta house, still he never through life forgot the misery he had suffered as a boy, nor the sweet charity which relieved

* The above words are, as nearly as possible, a literal translation of one of the old "*Volks Lied*," the date of which is said to be unknown. The zither which Martin Luther loved to play in Eisenach, while dwelling in Conrad Cotta's house, is the national instrument of the country. The word "zither" is obviously merely a corruption of the Latin "*cithera*," whence comes the English "guitar." The instrument itself, however, is smaller than a guitar, and more like a diminutive banjo in shape, while its "strings" are all of wire, of different thicknesses. It has a sweet though somewhat brassy and cymbal-like tone.

it; so that when, some years afterwards, the quondam currend-scholar had become transformed into the great Doctor Martin Luther, the learned teacher of theology at the high University of Wittenberg, and young Heinrich Cotta, then a youth of some twenty years, came thither to profit by the words of wisdom that flowed from his former playmate's lips, Martin no sooner heard of young Cotta's arrival at the college than he made the youth come and live with him at his rooms, saying it was, after all, but a poor recompense for the great kindness of Ursula and Conrad to himself.

Nor did Martin Luther ever, when he had won for himself the name of the Great German Reformer, forget the time when he was a begging currend-singer in the Thuringian city; nor fail, when he thought or spoke of the town in which he had known so much misery and so much happiness, to style it his "beloved old Eisenach."

Far on in after years, too, would he recall the loving kindness of Dame Ursula, and then say, with a grateful sigh, "Ah, verily there is nothing sweeter on earth than the heart of a woman in which pity dwells!"

FINIS.

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